WILD BLOOD

GORDON YOUNG

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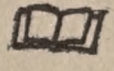
WILD BLOOD

By

GORDON YOUNG

Author of Savages, Etc.



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ARTHUR SULLIVANT HOFFMAN

A good friend, a bold and generous editor

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CHAPTER I

THREE THIEVES AND LADY BETTY

TWO men were in the shanty bar, sitting at a rough board table; and I was the third. We were on benches under a corrugated-iron roof and a bottle of gin was before us. We leaned heavily, elbows to table.

The sun was hot and the roof was like a baker's door. Flies buzzed about with fretful persistence.

A dozen men slouched at the bar or dozed along the benches. Some were heavily booted, wearing coarse blue or red shirts, and were hairy of throat. Many of them were bearded. When they paid for drinks they would pull little chamois-skin bags from under armpits or from wide-pocketed belts.

These men were from the diggings. They lay in port waiting for the boat, under the delusion that they could get drunker in Melbourne than at Turkee. It takes experience and some philosophy to convince a man that after a few glasses it makes no difference whether he is under polished tables or rough benches.

A discouraged squatter was dolefully pouring out a tale of drought and myalls to a miner who stood and

dozed uneasily against the board counter. Two or three sailors, deserters no doubt, snored on the narrow benches.

A pair of troopers, elbow to elbow, paused in passing and filled the doorway. They said nothing, but stared with a certain detached authoritative insolence, as men perhaps have the right to do when they know themselves well hated, feared; yet dare to ride alone, and often do not come back.

They would not have been far in the wrong had they grabbed any man there, and haled him out, though they might have guessed wrong in naming the charge, for crime was very protean in Australia. But judges frowned at troopers who leaned on guesswork; so many a man went impudently free through being tight-lipped.

My lips were never closed, except about the neck of a bottle. I mentioned to my companions how fortunate, then, that my record was without stain.

Each of them looked at me: the somber Englishman with the slow, steady gaze of a man who wonders a little, but doesn't understand nor greatly care; the other man, not big but deep-chested and muscled like a python, had a flicker of amusement in his narrow gray eyes. He was sparing of words, tight-lipped and sober; always sober.

The troopers, thumbs in belts, turned smartly on their heels and walked away. Perhaps they were looking for some one; or maybe they paused to allow us to look at them. Understand me: I would not sneer at an Australian trooper; not even behind his back; not even with three thousand miles between us; not though he were dead and damned, like most of the men of those days.

I pulled the bottle closer to my elbow and peered at the low-water mark. The sweet-bitter kiss of glass lips

tingled my blood. Let those two men go on with their talk. One way or the other, or whatever they did, was nothing for me to worry about.

Though whatever they did would affect me quite as much as themselves. I was not much more than a young fellow. And even then I had made the choice of many crossroads; and I always felt that one was as good as another.

If we stole a ship and went north with this strange Englishman, who evidently had a quest that he was not telling to us—for I thought he lied like a man who knows what he wants—why, then there would be queer things happen, and novelty is pleasure. If we stayed where we were, something would happen. It always did. I never stayed where I was for a length of time. I never liked many things to happen in the same place.

The tall, gaunt Englishman with the slender feet and the long nose and the black beard—the very black beard—did not know to whom he was talking. But he was in earnest.

In those days you took a man as you found him. It was impertinent to ask for credentials. He was a reserved, self-possessed, grim sort of a person, this Englishman—with heavy black brows and deep black eyes. Davenant his name, he said.

Had he known to whom he was talking he might have gone excitedly after the troopers; and shared various rewards with them. Perhaps not.

He could have shouted any one of my two or three names at all the troopers from Carpentaria to Melbourne. I was no mainland loafer. In the islands northward, in some of them, I was a little better known. Not much though, for mine was an exceedingly modest renown.

Missionaries in particular knew me, by repute when not so favored personally; and were most unchristian in their attitude. It wasn't my fault if their bishop hadn't known whisky was in his ginger ale.

Ah, but he made a grand speech; and right there and then gave the native girls permission to dance—right there and then. A row of white, pious, horrified faces were turned to him, but his eyes were perhaps a little blurred. Though it seemed to me that he did enjoy the *siva.* I did. So it was for one thing and another, I was remembered in one place and another. One doesn't loaf around in the South Seas for a dozen years without getting acquainted.

But the man at my side—I could have had a thousand pounds, a good round sum for a shifting idler, by merely whispering his name into a trooper's ear. Perhaps a rounder, fuller sum than that.

Legends were around that name. It was known over the Seven Seas and in most of their ports. Dead or alive, said the British government; and when the British government says that, this earth becomes a very small spot to dodge about on. Another European government wanted him dead. And he was supposed to be.

A fat, bearded scientist who spoke English thickly, on his way to the Solomons to study anthropogeny and head-drying, had confided with me, a year before, that he was to make demands upon the natives, and barter generously, for white men's heads, in the hope that this fellow's would be among them. Would I go along and identify the head?

My friend was known to have been wrecked and thought to have been killed on the eastern tip of Guadalcanar. The naval officers of three countries had orders

to take him, wherever found, as they would any pirate. One may write an order with a goose-quill and the merest drop of ink. But he knew reefs and atolls that were not on the map; he knew of anchorage and harbor that were not mentioned in the sailing directions, and the natives said that with his own breath he could make canvas pull.

But a German gunboat had shelled his little schooner, driven him ashore, and came on to find it burning. As usual, he had powder and dynamite on board. Even wrecked, he was too much for them. He disappeared into the bush.

German sailors had gone in after him and found cannibals. And on the rafters of some *gamal* house near that place a half dozen German heads are yet grinning under the softening veils of dust—unless the German scientist bid high enough to have them brought to him. In that vicinity white men's heads are treasures to be desired above pearls and rubies. Yet this outlaw of the sea and land came through.

Those were stern, fierce, vivid days. Looking backward one can see so much better than when merely looking around. But what was then the present was so much more tame than what had gone before that even we looked grudgingly behind us to "the good old days," which were even more inhuman and cruel than the early seventies.

Adventurers came from the ends of the earth. They had been coming for a century, for centuries. Spaniards and French and Portuguese, English and Yankee, Arab and Chinaman, all came. Out of England the *Scarborough,* the *Neptune,* the *Success* had brought them

willy-nilly, in chains. Many a good citizen of the land had a father with "M" burned in his palm.

The good citizens later rose and burned, properly, the convict records; or such as they could get their torches to. It is hard to tell convict blood without a birth certificate; especially in Australia, whither murderers and those who stole loaves off a London cart-tail, or snared a rabbit under the nose of milord's gamekeeper, or wrote a pamphlet telling some truths about the king's rule were despatched in equally heavy chains. Also branded, burned and lashed; turned over as slaves to freemen; bullied, cheated and tormented; but mostly beaten.

Frequently they escaped, and ranged the bush, more ferocious than the cannibal blacks, the myalls, whom they often joined. Missionaries had begun coming with Bibles and bundles of trousers and petticoats, all for the natives, at about the same time as these convict ships from Christian lands.

For a half-century bold, hard seamen from New Bedford and Salem had been dragging whales out of the South Seas—and all the other seas on the globe—and putting them into casks, that civilized people might have oil for lamps. Mutineers and deserters had left footprints on every beach. The *Bounty* was not the only ship that set her officers adrift; seamen hoping these officers would die, but without the courage to kill them.

Respect for officers was beaten in with the cat and the rope's end, and strangely few were murdered for it. But the lure of the purple-plumaged islands and brown maids was strong, and deserters were many.

Some time in the early fifties gold was found and the four winds brought a headlong rush of men, and women

of a kind; and a few of the other kind. The whole face of Australia was scratched and gouged.

From one digging to another men scampered, drinking, gambling, quarreling, fighting, robbing, working, saving, dreaming, planning—but ready to pause at any time to chase the chinks. Yellow men were harried out of the camps, killed, or driven into a vicarious massacre under the clubs of the myalls.

After the vanguard, always the herder and the plowman. Herders loosened countless droves of cattle, and billows upon billows of sheep moved over the hills. Enormous plantations were laid out; from Tahiti to Queensland ships went out among the more savage islands to "recruit" blacks with beads, gin or manacles.

Seamen hunted natives, themselves headhunters, and dragged them off to a merciless slavery euphemistically termed "contract labor." Sometimes the savages cut out the blackbirder—and wore the manacles for earrings.

Traders too went to gather whatever could be carried off, from ancient weapons to copra. Factories sprang up and the dried coconut went forth to cleanse the world with soft-scented soap. It was quite common for traders to be butchered and eaten. It is not unheard of now. On the sea, under one guise and another, captains were pirates; and pearlers put out in luggers to scrape oysters from their beds, give orient gems to the ears and necks of distant ladies and buttons to trousers and coats of gentlemen. Lumbermen went into perfumed islands, where perhaps the Phœnicians had been before them—for where else is sandalwood to be found?—and often under streams of arrows, poisoned, cut down forests that the silks and linen of dainty women from Japan to London might be sweetly scented.

Natives rose in brief, futile fights and butchered, with horrible ferocity, whom they could overnight. In three tongues the chancelleries of Europe quarreled over distant rights. And French convicts continued to be sent to New Caledonia.

From the days of Wallis and Cook to this very hour, under the guidance of another Cook, white men came and ate of the lotus and drowsed dreamily, head in the lap of a brown girl, remembering indifferently through a soothing stupor that some place in the world there was something rather of a nuisance called Civilization.

No man gets rich without wanting other men to obey the laws; and Civilization is as irresistible as if it were a plague. So the man who called himself Douglas Moore was an outlaw, on sea and land.

The Englishman, Davenant, thought that *he* was the interested party. He thought that he had, more or less by accident, stumbled on to a navigator. It was amusing to hear him wrestling with Moore's conscience explaining why it would be really honest to take out the *Lady Betty,* to let her drift on the early tide, spread sail and scamper off.

The trouble was, though Moore did not say so in the presence of the Englishman, that the *Lady Betty* was encrusted with barnacles and needed some work on her bottom. There she lay, with three broken-down caretakers playing cribbage on board. They represented three important creditors, and a half dozen little ones as well.

Who owned her? After she had been refitted and provisioned there arose a conflict of ownership. Who was to pay the bills? Davenant asserted that he owned her, and showed papers and made affidavits. He had

bought her from a Yankee captain who was to remain the skipper.

But the Yankee had gone mysteriously. In fact he had gone before collecting the entire purchase price. He had gone about the same time that the A. B. A. Shipping Company of Sydney had sent one of its men down to get and hold the *Lady Betty.* She belonged to the A. B. A.

The Yankee had no right to sell her. It was, the A. B. A. intimated, characteristic of Yankees to sell things they had no right to.

She was not the *Lady Betty* anyway. She was the *O. P. Jones,* in honor of one of the founders of the company.

Scratch out the *Lady Betty* and, they said, the trace of *O. P. Jones* would be visible. But it wasn't. Then they said Yankees were damn clever, but she was the *O. P. Jones* anyway.

Davenant wanted to get away. He was going after pearls—he said. He knew of an atoll where there were pearls, a virgin bed. He could not afford to stand around on his toes waiting for the A. B. A. to scratch off all the fresh paint in order to find *O. P. Jones.* He wanted to get away, and he had run across Douglas Moore.

Douglas Moore had more than one name. And he had almost everything else that went to make a man hard to catch and harder to hold. He knew all about Davenant's troubles over the *Lady Betty* and the dispute as to her sex.

He had inquired about him and learned nothing except that he had a daughter in Melbourne lonesomely awaiting the outcome of the difficulties her father—that is, he was supposed to be her father—was in. So when

Davenant sought out Douglas Moore he was merely taking an artful bait that had been dropped in his way.

Moore kept his own counsel. He had only Burly Ben Hawkins and me to confide in.

However, I had a suspicion that he was thinking about taking out the *Lady Betty* anyway—with or without Davenant. But just at present he seemed indifferent. For one thing he wanted about twice as much money as the Englishman was willing to offer.

"When the voyage is over I shall make you a present of the ship," Davenant had said. Few things could be more enticing than that to some men.

"And let the A. B. A. libel her the first time she shows up in a port," said the man who called himself Moore. "And me be hanged for piracy!"

He knew very well that at most the *Lady Betty* would add only an inch or two to the height of his gallows. But there is likely to be something wrong with a voyage when the owner so easily promises to give over the ship. Precious lot of pearls one would have to scoop up to pay for a ninety-ton brig that had nothing the matter with her but barnacles and a little rib or two that might spring a leak if hard hit.

But what that bearded Englishman didn't realize was that there was likely to be something even more wrong with a skipper who would take out a ship on the sort of proposition that was offered.

Moore asked to see the Englishman's map, and the Englishman pulled out a piece of rough brown paper with a few tracings on it, no names, but a cross at about 164 west and 12 below. Moore asked if it wasn't a copy from an Admiralty map, and Davenant was much impressed.

"You really know where you want to go?" asked Moore. He was thin-lipped and hard-faced, and he did not make much noise when he talked—not even when the wind was up and thunder boomed.

"I do," said Davenant firmly.

He nodded his head two or three times. Moore watched him. I said nothing. But I watched Moore.

"Then it is not the atoll, but Dakaru you want!"

Davenant sat up with a jerk. The English aren't a people to jump up and wave their arms. No. When a lean Englishman, one of the lanky, long, thin-nosed type, bats an eyelid twice in three seconds, he is excited.

Davenant did not bat an eyelid at all. He simply stared at Moore for about a half-minute. Which meant that he was paralyzed.

I tipped the square-face over my glass. But a few drops lazily trickled out; just a flavor. So I quietly reached over and took Moore's brimming glass, and left mine before him. He would never know.

"How, may I ask," said Davenant slowly, calmly, "do you surmise that?"

I paid the man a quiet compliment at the back of my brain, and began to think he had a well-tempered bit of steel for a backbone. He was no ordinary man. One would guess that at a glance.

He was one of those fellows that could be thrown on to a beach in a pair of drawers and still give the impression of having come from a reception to my lord mayor. And he used words as if he knew what they meant and was particular.

Said Moore: "That's the only spot within the radius of a thousand miles, or nearly that, where's a real planta-

tion. Grahame's a fierce fellow, and skippers give him a wide berth."

"But there are—are pearls," Davenant insisted nervously.

"There is an atoll two points east and sixty miles south, of this reckoning," Moore said, taking the paper. "There's bound to be good shell. Right temperature. Grahame owns it. But how can you or I sell shell out of the *Lady Betty's* hold? She'll be seized as soon as she sticks her stem into port. Turn the shell over to a pearler and he'll steal it."

"What proposition can I make you?" asked Davenant, a little more impressed than he ever thought of being by a stray sailor.

Moore laid it down briefly. He would agree to get Davenant to Dakaru—the native name of the island, since changed to honor some dead man who is supposed to have discovered it—in six months; but he must have full and complete charge and no questions asked in the meantime. Also twelve hundred pounds, cash, on board the *Lady Betty*.

"You are probably aware that it may be necessary to use—ah—force," said Davenant watchfully.

Moore's thin lips twisted a little. He nodded.

"Miscalculations would be embarrassing to me," said Davenant.

Moore said, "No doubt."

"I dislike the delay, though time is not the great factor with me."

Moore said nothing. He had done his talking—and never did very much. This was the third or fourth conversation.

"It may take some time for me to obtain that amount —in cash."

Davenant had just a trifle hesitancy, naturally. He really had no surety that he would get full service for his money. But he was a man in earnest. Who dices with the devil must fling gold to the table.

At the first meeting Davenant had intimated that he wanted references. Moore told him they were the easiest of things to furnish—that there were plenty of people round about who would write them out, so much per word.

Davenant took it silently, unsmilingly. Perhaps he was a judge of men. I wondered.

"Six months," said Davenant, a fresh suspicion coming to him. "You intend to use the ship for some enterprise of your own?"

"No. I'm after leeway. I keep agreements. There's a crew to get. A proper night to wait for. Proper beach to find and scrape her. Supplies to be had that you haven't. Takes time.

"I'll raise Dakaru in one hundred-eighty days, or before. But no questions asked or answered. That's final."

He had a way of conveying finality that was much more effective than words sound. Every move he made, every word he said, was decisive. He was tense, always tense; and never restless. His voice was never loud but his words snapped. There was no hesitancy about him.

"I agree," said Davenant after a pause.

Moore nodded.

"I shall give you the money as soon as I can arrange for it."

"No. Give it to me as I need it."

Another surprise for Mr. Davenant. Was the man a subtler rogue than he thought or no rogue at all? The question looked out of his eyes. But one didn't question Douglas Moore; not even when one didn't know who he was. That is, one didn't ask him personal questions; though Davenant after a little nervous silence said something about hoping that Grahame was not a friend.

Moore might have said many things, and each of them have been the truth. He might have rounded out some full curses and launched them on Grahame's head with the true eloquence of my friend, Ben Hawkins, when wrath was on him. He might have briefly told a short story, and how a knife at thirty feet had gone from his hand to search for Grahame's heart.

But perhaps he would not have mentioned that he was glad the knife had not found it. Or maybe he wasn't glad. I don't know. Some people said Douglas Moore was crazy; so tensely quiet, always—until he unleashed himself. Then he went headlong. No reserve. No caution. No—I was about to say no mercy.

Legend had it that he hated white men. That he was a renegade. Anyway he hated Grahame—or had reason to. But all that he did say was, abruptly, directly, that Grahame was not a friend; and Davenant had no way of knowing that Grahame was an enemy.

"Then it is settled," Davenant remarked a little uneasily.

I felt that he wanted some papers signed, some witnesses to swear, some sort of solemnity to give the agreement a kind of culmination. He had, I reflected, come from civilized countries where an agreement was not likely to be observed to the letter unless it was riveted by lawyers. A strange man's mere word seemed

such a stupid thing to depend on; no more binding than a dead man's word.

And this contract was important to Davenant. He showed it even by his repression. He had about him a manner of well-bred awkwardness. He was dealing with things of which he knew nothing. Maybe the ease with which he had been fleeced by the Yankee skipper showed him how helpless he really was; but he was determined.

Perhaps this black-bearded Englishman wasn't helpless at all, but had to gamble at times, and risk a loss. One someway doesn't expect an Englishman to be black-bearded or to appear as Davenant did. But he was English—born so, anyway.

"Yes," said Moore. "Settled."

Davenant stood up, hesitated, looked toward the door and again at Moore, and seemed about to speak. He was tall and thin and erect in the shoulders. He stood not knowing exactly what to do; a glance fell on the empty bottle.

For a moment I thought he was going to ask us to pledge a toast of some kind; it would have been a grim sort of a toast if the truth were in it. One could see that. I am sure he felt that something, something definite, perhaps a little dramatic, ought to be done.

But he said, "Good afternoon" almost casually and walked off.

Douglas Moore sat motionless, his forearms spread on the table. His eyes set at nothing; his thin lips tight and straight. The muscles at the back of his jaw bulged; his teeth were set hard.

I drummed softly with the bottoms of two glasses, and in a sort of rhythmic monotone said:

"And now the devil is telling 'em to stir the fire and

get out the biggest pot. There'll be soup o' dead men's bones, and blood splashed to the moon. . . ."

And I kept one eye cocked on Douglas Moore. Sometimes he seemed to listen to my nonsense as if it were a little pleasing, for when I was the better for a tumbler or two of gin I had the world in my pocket and my lips were restless. Sometimes he did not even hear me, did not hear even Hawkins and me together.

"Get me a crew," he said abruptly.

With that he stood up, paused, picked the gin-bottle from the table and, tossing it to the dirt floor, went to the bar. He spoke to the red-faced barman and went out.

"Get me a crew," he had said.

That was the worst of him. He did unexpected things—taking it for granted that I could do things he wanted, as he wanted. I did not like to be uneasy about doing anything right.

The barman waddled to the table and clapped down a square-face; gruntingly stooped over and picked up the empty bottle and went back to his domain behind the bar of rough boards with only figured calico draped in front of them.

The discouraged squatter was still weaving his troubles into an epic of the immigrant's travail for the drowsy miner. The sailors snored unrestfully on their splintery couches. I eyed my virgin bottle: inspiration is always at the bottom of a square-face.

But I would be generous. I would drink it in the presence of Burly Ben Hawkins. He was a good friend.

CHAPTER II

A BOTTLE OF GIN—OH-HO!

I FOUND Ben Hawkins with his back against a gum-stump, his legs spread before him, his hands folded across his belly. His head was bent forward as if in solemn contemplation of that imposing region inhabited by his stomach. But his eyes were shut.

Hawkins was a prodigious man. In weight he was elephantine; in appetite a python; in soporific tenacity he could have subbed for one of the Seven Sleepers. A wicked and slothful creature, who would eat and drink everything in sight if he wasn't watched.

He smoked an enormous pipe and other people's tobacco. His cheeks drooped; his abdomen bulged so overshadowingly that it was impossible for him to scratch his left knee with his right hand; and he was nearly as broad as he was tall.

Sometimes he combed his hair, but what was the use? It was curly. Occasionally he coaxed me to shave him because more than a four days' growth of beard made his face itch. Usually his face was thickly stubbed with short black hairs.

His voice was hoarse and subterranean. And I loved him as my brother from the first hour we met.

"Give me three pounds of tembac," this strange mountain of a man had said to the nervous little blond cockney in a general store at the mines.

The tobacco was handed to him.

He weighed it studiously, then:

"Here, my man, I don't want this. Give me a square-face."

The jumpy little clerk received the tobacco again and set a bottle of gin on the counter.

I was the other customer in the store.

"Red-Top, ever cheer your stomach with a drop of white-fire? From the looks o' you, you need one of my lamb stews. To make it proper you catch the lamb when the herder ain't lookin' an' hold him tight so the cussed thing won't baa-aa-a till you get a mile 'r so down the road. Best to bury head, hide and hoofs.

"If you'd move fast, I don't believe you'd cast a shadow! You need fattenin'.

"Bury head, hide and hoofs. Police 're awful nosey in this man's land. Then you dip up a little water, flavor same with a pint o' brandy borrowed from last station; cut up the two onions—nice fat fellows, borrowed from the same place; also the half dozen potatoes. Set the old iron kettle over a dry wood fire, and when she comes to a boil crumble in some o' that cheese borrowed from—don't make no difference what station.

"There's tucker for you! Look to me. My cookin' done that——"

And he tapped his noble belly in justifiable pride of large achievement.

"Start 'er, Red-Top, and take your fill. I never let go till bottom o' bottle, keg or barrel goes toward heaven."

The clerk rather timidly offered a grimy cup, but the big man waved it away and pushed the bottle at me.

I drank and handed the bottle over to him. He was

no idle boaster. He held the bottle at arm's length for a second or two like a fond lover anticipating the embrace, then raised it to his lips, took a mighty breath and drank, and drank, drank, and drank.

Slowly the bottom of that bottle crept upward and upward until, with him leaning far back as if trying to hide behind his own vast paunch, there was not a drop left. He straightened himself and puffed mightily, clapped the emptied bottle to counter and said:

"I like a bit of a swig 'fore dinner. Goin' down the street?"

We started off.

"Hi sye," called the cockney, "w'at habout that gin?"

The mountainous man turned with stiffened shoulders, slowly, imposingly.

"Hyu dydn't pye me."

"Pay you? Pay you?" said the strange fellow with deepening voice. "Didn't I give you the tembac for it?"

The cockney eyes and lips twitched for a moment in amazement; then—

"Hyu dydn't pye me for that!"

"Of course I didn't. I give it you for the square-face. Damn rotten stuff it was, too. Near gagged me. Think you tampered with it. Didn't you? Didn't you? I'll complain to the first trooper I see, an' you'll have to open another 'un and let him test it.

"My good freckled friend here'll testify I give you three pound o' tembac for a bad bottle o' gin. Rotten stuff, wasn't it?"

I affirmed that it was wretched stuff.

The poor cockney had a sort of cross-eyed expression on his face. He knew of course that someway he was

being bilked, and he knew how, but he was just a little baffled as to the way to cut through and say so.

"Are you satisfied?" demanded my companion with a haughty depth of voice.

"Y-ice," said the cockney. "Honly keep hout hof my plyce!"

"I will; indeed I will. No storekeeper can cheat *me* more than once," Hawkins returned pompously.

Taking my arm forcibly, he strode out.

I murmured something of my admiration for his new and original method of evading the perils of thirst.

"No, no," he rumbled. "Old Yankee trick. Useful in a pinch. I hadn't a shillin' and I had to have a drink. Good white-fire that."

I agreed that it was.

"Shiver my jib-boom," he said abruptly, stopping. "I'm a sea-captain. Avast the belayin'-pin and take two turns round the bobstay, lower away the ratlin' and—don't you believe it?"

From his pocket he pulled a flat oblong paper, neatly protected by fishskin.

"Here's a master's certificate to sail any ship he can get his feet on. Don't want 'o buy it, do you? I'm a starvin' man. Think o' the years I worked and toiled to get this little piece of paper I'm offering you for a guinea. You keep the paper for security. I couldn't part with it.

"You see b'fore you a perishin' fellow creature," and he lowered his reverberant voice dolefully, at the same time endeavoring to draw his very fat face into an expression of despairing hunger.

But the strain was too great. He came out of his affected melancholy with a roar, a great internal explo-

sion of laughter so that his body shook as if by an earthquake from within.

"Who did you steal this from?" I asked.

"Steal? Me? Sir!" Then, chuckling, "Taught a sailor to play poker and thought this might come in handy, seein' as he didn't have more money."

I would guess that some seaman had robbed a skipper of his papers, probably for vengeance.

Having in mind that Douglas Moore might somehow find occasion to use that paper by way of credentials—though he never did—I promised the man a guinea, and added an invitation to eat with us. He had said he was broke. Besides I liked him.

"Take it," he almost shouted with an impulsive gesture of two big hands. "Don't know one end of a ship from t'other. Just as soon go to hell as to sea.

"Shipped once. Boat went on a mud-bank. Captain had me running from one side t'other to work 'er off. Ever' time I go to sea, have to set on the main hatch to keep 'er from listin'.

"Went out on a yard—once. Got my feet wet. Hate ships. Never anything to eat on 'em. My name's Hawkins. Ben Hawkins. Burly Ben they call me—sometimes.

"I been called lots o' things. Sometimes I get excited an' set down on somebody. Silence."

He said that last in a low, slow solemn voice, spreading his hands with a gesture, *diminuendo*.

"Got any tobacco?"

I offered him "niggerhead."

Hawkins had been in the South Seas eighteen months or so, visited a few of the islands and come into Victoria to "look around." So he said. But he was likely to say

anything, with or without innocent intent. The zest of life was within him. He liked to talk, and with the breathless brevity of fat men made his sentences short.

Douglas Moore had thought it best to get far away from the place where he was known, at least for a while; so he came around to Melbourne and vicinity and brought me with him. Some years before when our acquaintanceship was new he had asked, "And will you keep sober?"

"I will not," I told him.

"At least you are no liar," he said with a queer gleam in his fierce eyes.

So in one way and another we had become something like friends. I asked no questions and he gave no information. He had a curious weakness for thinking I knew more than I did, and his orders were disconcertingly brief.

Tradition had it that Moore had amassed a fortune and hid it away—when he had to pay three prices for everything to anybody that would sell to him. Many men found it more profitable to be friendly with him than to snatch at the price on his head. For one thing it was convenient to have Moore to blame for their own crimes. For another, supposing he wasn't caught and learned who set officers in his wake? Moore stayed clear of white men as much as he could. He was called a renegade. Natives liked him. Plenty of natives would have given him up, but some would not. Many a chief lied for him, and native kings to a man almost were as his blood-brothers.

Gin and rifles? No doubt he did furnish those things more than was legal, perhaps more than was wise and

proper. But he had overhauled more than one blackbirder and taken back the captives to their own beach.

To win favor with the natives? Perhaps. He knew, I knew, all who have been near them know, that natives are not innocent and guileless; not even the best of them. But the worst of them are loyal and generous—unless they have been too intimate with white men.

Time came when the devil seemed clamoring for pay, and Moore had got out of the islands and drifted like any other gold-hunter around to the bottom of Australia. I came along. So there we were when Hawkins loomed before the cockney clerk.

I brought Hawkins to our shack, and he ate everything in sight and called it a "snack." Moore had looked him over hard and said nothing. Hawkins had stared at Moore and been quiet for an hour or so—perhaps because he had been eating.

I am about as thin as a hawser, and my joints are loose; so one evening when Moore was away two bushy roughs came by, and were not mistaken in thinking I was an easy one to dispose of, and that they might then plunder the shack.

Hawkins, inside in the dark, quietly, so he might accuse the rats of having made off with it, was eating a slab of "damper." I had time to make one little squeak before a hangman's grip was around my neck—then a mountain came through the doorway. The two gentlemen who had thought to bail up our lonesome little place were spilled on the ground, and the weighty knee of Hawkins held first one and then the other while he proceeded to search.

Hawkins emptied their pockets and calmly appropriated the fair amount of dust he found on each. He

called it "manna." After which he hobbled the two gentleman together, and we marched them over the dark road three miles to a jail at the diggings.

The bushrangers protested indignantly that *they* had been robbed. Their mugs were against them. They were wanted men, and known to the constables.

And back we trudged, loaded down with gin, rum and tobacco; the necessities of life. We left to Moore the supplying of incidentals such as flour, sugar, mutton, bacon, butter and tea. Oh, yes; we each bought a candle apiece so we could see to use the corkscrew, in the dark. Hawkins ate his—the candle I mean. Many and merry were the songs we sang on the way.

Moore looked at us—looked grimly, hard, at us—as we rolled in at dawn. I was drunk. I know. But I heard what he said, and I remember how he said it; half to himself, but aloud, tense, earnestly, not sarcastically.

"God, how I envy you fools! I *envy* you!"

So that day when Moore had settled with Davenant and given me abrupt orders to find him a crew, I searched out Hawkins taking a nap against a stump.

By occasional tests I had discovered that Hawkins could not run—at least not far or fast. He could move fast simply by falling forward, and once within reach of his hands, one of which would almost hide a fair-sized sirloin, I was helpless as a corpse in the grip of a devil-fish.

I squatted down some fifteen feet away and tossed a light pebble at him. Then a fair-sized chip zipped at his head. A miss. I tossed a clod at the unmissable belly, and he stiffened up with an ox-like grunt and swore.

I stroked the bottle tenderly. A flash of interest passed over his face, but I told him to keep his seat.

"Water," he said contemptuously.

Now and then I had poured water into an empty square-face to watch the eager expression as he placed the bottle at his lips slowly change to one of surprised disgust as about half the quart went down before he knew what he was drinking.

"Business," I told him.

He drew a large bowl with a short stem to it from his pocket and demanded tobacco.

"Want to go to sea?"

"Me? I been to sea. Supposin' the boat runs out o' grub? An' me on 'er. Who's sure to be 'lected for supper? The cannibals! Give me a smoke."

I filled my pipe with a watchful eye on him. He made a move as if to rise, but I was on my feet and ready to retreat, tobacco, gin and all.

He settled himself disconsolately and tipped the flabby brim of a shapeless hat over his head with one eye peeking out, hypnotically directed at the bottle.

"Think of a ship loaded to the scuppers with iced beef and mutton; a hundred cases of eggs; pork and sausages; biscuits and flour enough to feed all that heard the Sermon on the Mount; a mountain of fresh butter; coffee and rice; cabbages, potatoes and onions; too, live cows and a haystack on the fo'c'sle head—nice for drowsing on afternoons. A barrel of apples right by the forem'st with the head knocked in! Think! The hold full of ice, covered with bottled ale and porter, and forty kegs of beer in the waist, with a spigot, cup and no sentry; sherry, gin and rum, and three hundred pounds of books. And only eight good men besides yourself—to have it all.

"Northward we'll climb over the softly breathing breast of the ocean and take on a batch of Kanakas to do

the work. We'll find a little island and pick up pearls, and all come back rich as nabobs. But they must be good men, good sailormen—so you won't have to do any work yourself."

Both of Hawkins's eyes were brightly visible and he was sitting up hungrily.

He commented on my imagination but made an elaborate effort to be less skeptical than he was.

"Listen," I whispered. "Moore's made a stake. He wants a ship and crew. You're the man to get it. He's only a landlubber himself. You and I'll run the ship.

"You have the gift of eloquence, Ben. Pick out good husky sailor boys, or if they aren't sailors, good husky lads able to warp a schooner off a mud-bank. You don't want to heave back and forth to rock 'er off.

"Remember that iced hold and the layer of bottled ale. Go quietly up and down, whispering to this man and that. Talk pearls and don't forget the haystack."

I moved a bit closer. He was interested, and whispered back to ask if Moore *had* made a stake. I assured him. But Ben eyed me dubiously when I again mentioned that Moore was a landsman, green as stale cheese.

"You get the crew. I'll find the ship. Moore pays. Have a pipe, old Leviathan."

I tossed him my pouch.

"Didn't I mention cigars? A hundred boxes! And the pearls. Shh-h, but—we may have to poach a bit, but there are pearls!"

"By the cracked crown of Cleopatra!" he muttered, eagerly ramming his finger into the pipe-bowl.

"Have a drink." I passed the bottle.

He sniffed it; then bent backward; but I salvaged a spoonful or so for myself by a desperate snatch.

"You're not leggin' me?"

Softly, confidingly: "Ben, old pal, how could you! Send 'em one at a time here to talk it over with me. Don't mention Moore. You and I are running this."

"Is he goin'?" A quality of interest was in the question.

"Of course."

"He's made a stake? How?"

"Don't be nosey. He's made a stake. By the way, ever' member of the crew gets a bit of an advance. But it has to be q. t. Very. Good strong drinkin' men."

So for the next few days it was I who lay propped against the stump in the shade while fellows of all stripe and color drifted up uneasily to question, listen, doubt, wonder.

"Get me a crew," Moore had said.

It wasn't the first time I had got him a crew, even of whites. I knew all that he wanted was eight or ten strong men, and no more than two or three needed to be sailors. He'd make sailors out of them. "Plenty quick, damyes" as a black boy of fair observation powers had remarked.

I served out gin and lies generously. Moore had gone to Melbourne with Davenant. I had a free hand. I talked of fresh milk and haystacks, bottled ale and a hold of ice; and fired some men, made others dubious, and convinced many that there was nothing to it.

Blame me for this and other things; I am offering a story, and not pointing a moral. And what could I have done with the truth? As it was a pair of constables called to squat at my feet and listen. I offered them the soft berths of cabin-boys, and spoke of a haystack on the

fo'c'sle head. They went away tapping their heads significantly.

Hawkins talked with vast gestures and strange oaths, displayed his captain's papers, and sent recruits trudging to me. Whisper "Treasure" to the winds, and the feet of men follow the echo as children the *Pied Piper*. Pearls are nearly as potent as pirate's gold, or nature's. Beer, ale and a haystack—it is magic.

One by one I settled on a choice of men; one or two who knew something of work aloft, and others big-muscled and hard. And to these I put it more or less direct: "Do you want to go north on a hell-ship that'll pay double wages to good men? You'll be welcome to quit any time you see land, and there won't be complaints in port for mutineers."

One by one they backed out, confused in mind between the two conflicting inducements; but now and then this fellow and that said he'd sign on for the Sulphur Lake itself. A bit of an air of mystery helped me, and for their own good I weeded the faint-hearted. I had sailed with Douglas Moore—under the name by which he was known from Manila to Port Said. Hawkins stewed and fussed as he saw the backsliders; but I cheered him up as best I could and waited.

All manner of rumors were in the air as to just how crazy we were. Was there ever a ship went out of port in those days, or these, where the truth was told to the forecastle? Perhaps—not.

Douglas Moore came back. He had nothing to say more than that I had done it in my own crazy way, as usual, and ask how many could reef and steer?

"Four say they can, but three are liars. One one-

eyed little fellow wants off the mainland, bad. He's a sailor."

For the next few days Moore had a desire to fish and he went out and around, and sometimes didn't come back with the night or dawn. As a skipper "reckless," men called him. Not so, except when crowded. He knew tides and currents because they were life and death to him, and he hazarded no chance that foresight would evade. There is a powerful pull of tide on the southern coast, where the whole of the antarctic draws its breath; and an occasional land breeze; also sand-banks.

One evening after a moody, protracted silence about the lone wavering candle, jammed into a bottle-neck and dripping to the table, Hawkins said to me:

"I heard of a fellow once broke the hemp three times. What'd they do with a man o' my weight? And when 're you goin' 'o buy them cows?"

"Meaning?"

"The *Lady Betty*," he whispered, folding his thick hands across his belly and staring at me.

"Who guessed it?"

"Raikes."

"Well?"

"He said you was Dan McGuire."

"And?"

Hawkins moistened his lips a time or two. He was reluctant to go on.

I looked at him lazily—as lazily as I could with my heart rising throatward.

"He said he'd seen you once at Apia. Pointed out as—as—as——"

He stopped.

"Yes. I've been there."

With resolution: "Said he didn't really know"—the voice dropped—"Hurricane Williams."

The candle wavered fretfully; a dingo wailed in lonesome anguish and a ghost-like breath passed through the uneasy forest behind our shack. The man called Moore was night-fishing out on the bay. It was moonless and he was alone.

I wondered how I could get word to him; and how we would get out. To take to the bush with native trackers put on the trail would be folly. He was no bush man.

"And he thinks I—I—am Williams?" I tried to laugh—a little.

"No. You're Dan McGuire, Raikes says. I've seen Hurricane Williams. Once."

"Where?" I asked slowly.

"Bundy Bay. We was 'cruitin' niggers. Williams showed up. We didn't get our niggers.

"Come alongside. Told our captain to start a fight an' he'd blow him an' his old *Fijian Maid* high as heaven. Said it was the captain's only chance to get there. Put the niggers back on the beach."

"Then why——"

But I checked myself. Perhaps after all the man was lying.

"Wouldn't mentioned it 'cept Raikes wondered who Moore might be. I said he was a landlubber—thought a sheet-anchor was something to keep beddin' from slippin' off o' nights. Raikes don't want to 'tract no 'tention to himself by informin' unless it *is* Williams. Thinks he'd get a pardon then."

"He said that?"

"Not in words. I ain't big a fool as I look. I knowed it was Williams—*that first day.*"

I knocked my pipe against the edge of the table and scrutinized the inside of the bowl as I spoke—

"And the *Lady Betty?*"

"I guessed it was her. Seein' as how you an' him an' that black Englishman had your heads together—an' knowin' Williams."

I arose carelessly, affected a yawn and threw myself on to my bunk; a revolver was under the pillow.

"We could divide the reward," I suggested speculatively, casually, without emphasis one way or the other.

Hawkins stood up slowly, fingers in belt. His shadow blotted out the side of the shack, and he said simply:

"You ain't that kind. Nor me. We got to look out for Raikes, though."

I wondered: Did this big fellow have blood on his own hands and think to shelter himself under the leadership of Hurricane Williams? Certainly no innocent, either of us. Certainly not villains either.

I was a wastrel and knew it and did not care—except perhaps when sober. Hawkins was not a ruffian. True, he was not such a simpleton as he appeared. Excitement, the zest for adventure, has made more villains than ever bad blood. Not so many perhaps as bad laws—laws hard to obey, and harder to make peace with when broken. And both together have made fewer no doubt than the lash and treadmill of early Australia.

But none of those were my excuse. Williams, indeed Williams had gone so far that the noose dangled above him; more than that he had once dangled from it. And I followed him in a way that probably did not greatly

differ, if dogs could speak and explain, from the way a dog follows a master.

Williams was strange; ferocious at times, occasionally cruel; but someway, if one understood, never without a certain—not nobility, or dignity, so much as justification. He was almost always moved by something visibly deeper than mere anger; somehow there seemed a *principle,* sensed rather than thought about, from which he never was deflected.

What excuse could Hawkins have for loyalty to Williams? Williams had done a world of things for me. I put it to him bluntly:

"Moore *is* Williams. Why didn't you inform?"

Hawkins fumbled at my pouch on the table, awkwardly filled his mouth with tobacco, spat toward the doorway once or twice, pretended to adjust the candle and brushed to the floor a thick mess of dead and half-dead insects that littered the table. Then:

"Maybe I'm like Raikes. Only I know I wouldn't get a pardon."

"I'm interested." And I was.

"I killed the captain o' the *Fijian Maid.* Stretched me over the main hatch an' served rope-end."

"That's a lie. Papers at Sydney carried an interview with him when he came back from Bundy Bay that time."

Hawkins, unannoyed, unoffended, looked at me. He really seemed to have an absent-minded expression on his big, thick face.

"Just as bad not to kill 'm—since I tried. An' how d'you expect *me* to hide? If I's skinny I'd crawl in a snake-hole. What about Raikes?"

That was no time to quarrel with Hawkins. I did

not exactly mistrust him; but it isn't restful to wake up and find a stranger has your secret.

We talked about Raikes. We knew where he was. We knew about what he would be doing. . . When Douglas Moore, who might as well be called by his better known name, Williams—termed "Hurricane," not so much to commemorate any experience with a wild blow, as because of certain personal characteristics—when he, I say, came in shortly before day he found his bunk occupied.

Williams was muddy, wet and two-thirds naked. Hawkins and I were drowsily playing seven-up with dirty dog-eared cards.

"You're Cerberus," I said.

"Who's he?" demanded Hawkins.

"A big dog that guarded fellows like that." I indicated the bunk at which Williams had been looking. He had then turned questioningly to me.

By agreement Hawkins and I were to play until Williams came. The loser at that time was to be Raike's guardian.

"He guessed it, Skipper," I said to Williams, waving a hand toward the gagged and bound Raikes.

Williams stiffened, and without bending seemed to half-crouch. An attitude that I knew well; and one from which, as if shot by a spring, he could go across a room or deck. He looked at Hawkins, then at me. Hawkins did not notice.

"He was on the *Fijian Maid,*" I explained, a glance at Hawkins.

For a moment Williams seemed suspicious even of me. A thousand pounds is much money for a loafer, for two loafers, to have within arm's reach.

He turned toward Hawkins. His short questions jerked out answers:

"Her tonnage?"

"Hundred an' fifty," said Hawkins.

"Captain?"

"Carp Taylor."

"Where?"

"Bundy Bay."

"What kind of ship's boat did I come longside in?"

"Native boat it was. Ten niggers. One of 'em had a coconut in his hand."

Williams nearly smiled. He was satisfied that Hawkins had been at Bundy Bay. But it was no coconut the "nigger" held. Had anybody fired on the native boat as it lay alongside that fact would have been discovered, explosively.

Williams turned to the doorway through which the morning light came, and wrote in a little note-book.

"What shall I do with him?" Hawkins asked with accentuated helplessness.

"You know where my razor is?"

"Take off his ears first?"

I sat on a corner of the table and studied the problem. Raikes wasn't much of a problem; one of those men that seem made out of leather, and have been wet and shrunk. His lone eye glared viperously.

"No, I think I would take a chip off his nose. Too long for perfect beauty. Now yours is just about the right length, and shaped like a walnut."

Hawkins lifted my razor from the tin tobacco-box and approached the bunk, took hold of Raikes's nose and held the razor hoveringly.

I stooped over and showed him where to begin cutting. Raikes had quit thinking it might be a joke.

Then Hawkin's big arm was knocked up, half-broken.

I found myself across the shack and sitting on my neck.

Hawkins struck back, but he might as well have hit at a shadow, except that no shadow would have returned such a blow as came to his chin. He went over slowly, weakeningly.

"You drunken idiots!" Williams said between hard-set teeth.

I closed the eye that he had not hit and assumed unconsciousness. Hawkins, not unconscious, blinked wonderingly, and looked from around the leg of a table at Williams, who turned again to the doorway and went on with his notes.

We were half-drunk, it is true. But Hawkins showed no anger and held no grudge. Anyway, who knew of Hurricane Williams knew pretty much what to expect at times.

We both turned into our bunks, were asleep, and were shaken out again in what seemed about ten minutes.

"We take her out to-night," Williams said briefly.

There was much to do before then; much too much to do for two weary, sleepless men, one of whom had a headache and a blind eye.

CHAPTER III

THE WOMAN, BLACK-ROBED AND VIVID

NIGHT came, and with it down the road a wagon creaked slowly and stopped before our shack. Two people got off and went into the house. The wagon drove on and followed the road down toward the bay.

At some remote period a hungry wave had taken a bite out of the coast-line, a small bite, and people called it a bay. In a nook of that bay the *Lady Betty* rode her moorings placidly and awaited the judgment of magistrates.

It was toward the bay that the wagon went.

I had no time to notice closely the wagon or the passengers.

I was busily acting as a host. Hawkins should have been assisting. But he was acting as a guest. When there was anything to eat and drink he slipped into that rôle and stayed there.

There was much to drink; there was more to eat. Whole legs of mutton were roasting on an open oven, and bottled ale was to be had by reaching out and tightening the fingers. More came than were invited, but there was plenty for all; that is, plenty to eat. I served no strong liquors. They were carefully packed in a small barrel, and that barrel, I thought, was going aboard the *Lady Betty* just as surely as I did.

So were our guests going aboard. They did not know

it. Had the secret been whispered to them some if not many would have slipped away and babbled. They would learn in time. Now they were being pampered. Salt horse and biscuits were to follow.

Well fed and inwardly warmed, men are always easier to handle. They fall in with suggestions. Precious little good it would have done them to fall out. Williams had need of them.

Around on the ground a dozen men squatted. Rough fellows, rough of voice, manner, clothes and hands; loud and free with their words. Most of them were in boots. They puffed their pipes and drank, talked loud, and carved into the browned sweet, juicy legs dropped on the fresh plank before them.

All afternoon a cook, lured from a steady job by one day's high wage, had been at work. He was drunk as a cook should be; but his meat was done to the turn. A mound of sliced cabbage, soaked in soured wine and salted, was disappearing down voracious throats; and hot potatoes prodded out from under the ashes were opened and stuffed with butter.

I was to see that no man who might be useful on board the *Lady Betty* got uselessly drunk. I thought the cook was useful and he was already drunk; but he had been at it all afternoon.

Yet I was to see that no man noticed that he was not getting all he wanted to drink. I did it by being free with the ale and reserving the gin and rum for myself. Hawkins could die of thirst at sea before I would surrender a drop. He was entertaining himself with the story of his life, and relating how he worked up from cabin-boy to captain. Nobody believed him; but for all anybody knew he was paying for the feast, so many were attentive.

Others talked for themselves:

"Over on the Turon I washed out——"

"I seed 'em niggers swim un'er ducks an' pull 'em down by the laigs——"

"Believe me 'r not, them Burrendong nuggets was big as——"

"The heller took it broadside an' carried away the pipe fr'm 'tween my teeth—an' me in the crow's-nest, mindju!"

Somebody was trying to sing, and that unfortunately reminded Hawkins. He had a voice. I had told him earnestly that it was like the braying of a bull. A deep, roaring voice it was, and he lifted it up—or rather lowered it, for the louder he talked the deeper it seemed to come from his cavernous belly—in a chorus of:

"An' when we go to hell—to hell—
An' when our souls they take,
We'll hoist the skull an' cross-b-on-es
An' sail the Sulphur Lake!"

"You'll get your neck hoisted to a yard-arm, you make any noise like that above some ships I know," I mumbled into his ear.

"Say, Red-Top," he retorted aloud, very much aloud, "how *did* you get that eye spotted?"

And many fellows laughed.

One caught at my arm and asked if I'd seen Raikes.

Raikes, for safe-keeping, was stored under a bunk inside the house. I had forgotten Raikes. Hawkins, encouraged by those about him who knew nothing of harmony, was singing again:

"Fill 'er t' th' brim or fill 'er higher,
Fill 'er with rum or fill 'er with fire,
An' I'll drink 'er down—drink 'er down!"

Under the noise I whispered confidentially:

"Shh-hh! Raikes met a couple of fellows yesterday. He's hiding out."

The man nodded sympathetically.

That was how I came to be reminded that I had forgotten to feed Raikes.

I heaped up a tin plate with whatever was in sight. Williams—there never was such a man for remembering trifles—had told me to be sure to feed Raikes. I stuck a bottle of ale under each arm and went across, some hundred yards (for we didn't want the noisy barbecue too closely associated with our house) to the shack.

It was dark inside. Though I knew my way about as well as a rat knows a buttertub, I had my hands full and did stumble a bit just as I was saying, "Here, old Raikes, crawl out from—" and having stumbled, I swore a little.

A woman's voice, scornfully, bitterly—"Drunken beast!"

Holding a candle above my head I peered at the two dark, cloaked figures: the Englishman, Davenant, and his daughter, so-called.

Perhaps I was a little unsteady. For one thing it was a surprise; and maybe I was nervous.

And I had no way of knowing how I appeared to them; nor did I realize at the time that my brick-dust hair was thrusting itself at all angles. Throughout the afternoon I had been around a fire, all evening handling greasy meats, and as the mosquitoes were about my hands

had been many times to my face. I was grimy and greased. Also my eyes were discolored, and one was quite closed.

Having only one eye to use, logically it took longer than it would otherwise. I had a hard time believing that one eye.

She was too—I shall not say beautiful. She was more distinctive than that. I had read some place—Williams contrived always to have books about, though most of them were worthless technical things—as I was saying, I had read some place that wicked women look best in artificial light. If that were true, then she must be a daughter of the devil himself.

Women were about as common as coconuts; one found them every place. All kinds, except such as she. Stockmen's wives and daughters; squatters' wives, daughters and aunts; in towns there were always the disdainful, corseted wives and daughters of officials; and not counting natives—who were often ugly as the white ladies—there were plenty of women besides those mentioned. "Unmentionables," I believe they are sometimes called.

She differed from all of them.

She and Davenant in uneasy impatience had chosen to sit in the dark that they might the better be unnoticed until Williams returned.

The cloak enveloped her like folded raven wings. Her pale face with an imperious tilt met my stupid gaze. Black her eyes, and bright. Her fingers, lifted up and touching her cheek, were long, and rings glistened on them.

The face seemed rather long and the outline of the forehead, cheeks and chin was uneven, though her nose

was straight and thin. The brows were straight and black, the lashes long. A delicate face, but not sickly.

I had thought that women's mouths were all alike until I saw hers; it was wide, and expressive even in repose. She looked at me unalarmed, unembarrassed; but she evidently decided that I would not grow tired of staring.

At last she asked with repressed, stinging bitterness if she were the first woman I had ever seen.

"Yes'um, the first houri!"

A faint ripple of disdainful amusement ran soundlessly along her lips. She was not displeased.

I turned toward Davenant. He was staring at me in a sort of detached, impersonal, chilly sullenness. It was his way.

I dabbed the table with grease and stuck the candle upright and became the affable host, telling them they should have made themselves at home, lighted up, or even come down to the banquet. No doubt they had heard it. She nodded remotely. She heard it, and evidently she would just as soon not have heard it.

I asked them to excuse me for a minute as I had to feed Raikes, and requested the lady to lift her legs or move across the room.

Slowly, as if questioning my senses, she gathered her skirts and raised her feet on to the bunk where she was sitting.

"Come on, Raikesy, old boy. We've got company. Too bad you had a rag in your mug." And I rolled him out.

"Have to watch him," I explained to her. "He might bite. Rather think he will. I forgot to feed 'im.

Better not listen, 'cause he's likely to say awful swear-words."

I loosened Raike's gag, but he was silent. He did not so much as look at the woman or man. I glanced at them. They were looking, each at the other; they had not known there was anybody within ear-shot.

I loosened Raikes's hands, and he began eating wolfishly. Before, every time the man had had a chance to talk he had done so with vicious threats and curses. Not the presence of a woman would humble him. I knew that.

We were all strainedly silent.

At last she asked who he was.

"We're shanghai-ing him. Only sailor in port. Isn't much to look at, but you ought to hear him cuss. A real sailor."

She paid no attention to what I said, but looked intently at the blind profile of Raikes.

"That man shall not go with us," Davenant declared firmly.

"Indeed not!" she added decisively, meaningly.

"That's something you'll have to talk over with somebody that knows something about it," I said.

Raikes greedily guzzled from a bottle and, otherwise silent, kept his face averted.

There were other things for me to attend. I trussed Raikes up again. He did not resist as usual. I rolled him out of sight under the bunk, though there was really no need to—yet one could never tell who might drop in casually and ask questions.

In answer to Davenant's impatient demand to know when Douglas Moore would be back, I shook a non-committal head. I went out into the warm night.

Hawkins was still singing. There was much effort about it. I would have to remind him that vocal efforts on a loaded stomach were harmful to the voice.

But the world was not the same to me. I had looked upon Lilith—or somebody like her. I could not get that woman's face or voice out of my mind. I was bothered, fretted. I wished that I had been in Raikes's place, and listened.

Somebody was spinning a yarn. If there is truthfulness in wine I do not know what there is in ale. Perhaps the fellow was not wholly lying. Anyway, he had the attention of us all. He had been shipwrecked; there were five of them in the boat; they were dying of hunger and thirst; the usual rains had fallen from time to time, so that they sucked their shirts and eased parched tongues; as usual in stories of the kind somebody must be eaten, and he had discovered that by common consent he was to be the victim when—Williams appeared.

He was bare from the waist up. A long knife—and he knew how to use it—hung at his left side. He was wet.

"How many of you men want to go to sea, *now?*"

His voice was hard. He stood sternly looking from one to another in a way that wouldn't tempt many men to say "Yes," but would make the perceptive ones cautious of saying "No."

Three or four stood up, among them Hawkins.

"You fellows ain't goin' throw me down like this, are you?" Hawkins exclaimed.

I expected to hear from Williams at that. It was best to let him run things in his own way when he started. He said nothing. Two or three more stood up, mumbling

something about not knowing it was Hawkins they were going with.

"Take them to the beach," said Williams to Hawkins.

They stumbled away, Hawkins heartily in the lead.

"McGuire!"

"Yes, sir."

"Armed?"

"Yes, sir."

"Shoot the man that moves."

"Yes, sir."

I pulled the revolver from under my shirt. Williams walked hurriedly toward the shack.

I told the men that I was sorry—which I wasn't—but that trouble was in the air:

"Ground's cold an' worms'll make their beds in your marrow-bones—if you move. Who'll be the first to doubt I can hit 'im in the back at twenty paces? No? Well, I can't—so I won't wait for anybody to get that far."

It wasn't my presence, my armed attitude, my chatter, that kept them to the ground. They had heard Williams. He was convincing. Someway even I could do brave things if Williams told me to, or if he stood and watched.

Not that holding a few men, unarmed men, in a ragged circle was brave. Possibly they wouldn't have remained if they had known what was ahead for some of them during the next few months.

Presently came footsteps, and figures emerged from the shadows; Raikes in the lead, carrying the light bundle of personal effects of his own which Williams had had me make up for him: behind him, Williams, then Davenant and the woman.

"Stand up," said Williams.

Some stood up at once; some dragged themselves up reluctantly. Two sat still. I tried to convey good advice by unobtrusive gestures, but the two stubborn men did not see or heed. Williams did not repeat orders.

He grabbed the man nearest to him by the hair and jerked him forward. The man got up quickly enough. He arose with his arms flying like flails; and went down—knocked flat to his back.

The other man was on his feet when Williams looked around.

It had happened in clipped seconds.

The first fellow arose sullenly, perhaps wondering if it had been a club.

Face to back they were placed, hands on the shoulders in front, and Williams by the side of the line and I at the rear. Raikes was front man. It seemed that Raikes *was going* on the *Lady Betty.*

Down to the beach at midnight we marched, silent except for heavy steps.

Experience had taught Williams how easily men could be cowed if one got the "jump" on them. Though I doubt if he gave a thought to what constituted the jump. When he wanted something done it had to be done.

He had already been on board the *Lady Betty.* The three watchmen—one, I believe, placed there by the court; one by some chandler; and one—I don't know whom he represented. Possibly the A. B. A. Anyway the three of them had met Williams, and were lying quietly alongside the galley listening to the gentle splash of the outward tide that pulled at the *Lady Betty* as if to take her with it.

For one flickering minute it looked as if the men

would have trouble on the beach. They started in to talk, to ask questions, to protest.

Encouraged by Williams's ominous silence, they began to seem aggressive. They were freemen. They were British subjects—most of them. They were going to do this and not do that, and the constables, the troopers, the magistrates, the governor, the prime minister, the queen should hear of it!

"Stow that, you loons," cried a hard, rasping voice. "He's Hurricane Williams!"

Raikes had told it. In a moment of excited, generous warning he had blurted the name.

A sudden hush, a craning of necks and bulging of eyes, came over them. Hurricane Williams, renegade, pirate, cannibal—anything at all—was another person than the mere bullying stranger they had thought him.

The woman in French exclaimed, "Mother of God!" Davenant exploded a "What!" and followed it with a "You don't say!"

Williams ignored the mention of his name. But I wonder whether he was not thrilled by its magic; secretly a little proud of the awe. After all, the man must have been more human than he appeared. Or else he was mad, mad.

There was no wharf. Boats landed on the beach. Williams "borrowed" the three in sight, including a large flat-bottom punt-like thing owned by some Chinamen. The wagon that had brought Davenant and the woman was just above the sand, where the driver camped. The wagon was filled with boxes and bundles, some of them taken on at our shack; and the men, herded by Williams, Hawkins and me, carried them to the beach and filled the boats.

Williams put men at the oars of the first boat and made off, towing the others. Hawkins was in the second. I was in the last with Davenant and the woman.

"Is that man really Hurricane Williams?" she asked in a way that conveyed strong personal interest.

"Can't say for sure. But I never heard him deny it."

"What sort of man is he really?" asked Davenant.

"Asleep he's just like anybody else. Only he don't sleep much."

"And awake?" she asked feverishly.

"He don't let nobody else sleep. Easy man to get acquainted with. Very. All you have to do is shake your head when he tells you to do something. But I got a flour-barrel half full of gin and rum hid over there, and how am I going to get it?"

She asked more questions. Questions are the easiest things in the world to ask. There was a kind of tense curiosity in her tones, but her manner was cold. She was interested, but she did not want to appear to be.

I told her something in confidence, strict confidence, for I didn't see any reason why she should sleep that night, any more than the rest of us. Yes, Williams was a terrible man. Had she noticed that knife? Look out for that knife. Williams had an idea that the knife would die of thirst if it didn't drink blood every few days. It was too dark or I would show scars of where the knife had bit me—*while I was asleep.*

I whispered that to her in the tone always used by the hero in furtively warning the pretty girl on the blood-drenched boards of Sydney theaters.

"McGuire, look out!" Williams called at me.

I gave the steering-oar a swirl and brought our boat gunwale to gunwale alongside of Hawkins, who laid by

the overgrown sampan. Williams leaped up the low free-board of the *Lady Betty* and called four of the men. They went slowly.

"With a will there," he warned them. "Man that windlass."

He had not wasted his time when on the *Lady Betty* early in the evening. The gear was set, block and tackle bent to yard, and in no time at all the heavier boxes were jerked up to the deck. All was clear, and all of us were on deck.

In the hurly-burly of work somebody snatched at a file-rail and struck Williams a blow from behind. I saw it too late to interfere. It was the man who had first refused to move from the fire, and he struck with a belaying-pin.

Williams reeled forward, half-fell and came up, facing about—and hit, knife in hand; but it was the butt of the handle that he drove into the fellow's face. Seeing the fight was on, others had crouched to rush Williams.

I suppose I would have shot, but Hawkins got in my way. I could not see exactly what he did, for his back was the kind that cuts out all view of what goes on in front; but I had the impression that his two massive arms had reached in a sort of all-embracing circle; and the sharp crack as of husked coconuts striking together made me think that some heads had come one against another. Anyway quiet followed.

Williams stood for a moment above the groaning man he had knocked flat. He was half-stooping and trembled almost drunkenly as he looked down with distorted face. But he said nothing. He did nothing.

I was almost frozen for those five or six seconds, as I was always more or less frozen when I saw him in a

temper. The temper that made him a thunderbolt of suddenness, once loosened, was—or would have been in any other man—uncontrollable.

He straightened and turned away; a hand lifted to his neck where the pin had caught him; then his hand dropped. It must have hurt. But there was work to do.

I was sent to the wheel, near where the woman and Davenant stood in lonesome uncertainty, made a little uneasy by the clatter and movement forward. Backs bent to the windlass, the anchors were pulled up, and the *Lady Betty* floated free in a strong outward tide. But she had yet to be warped clear of the bay, else likely as not she would put her nose into a sand-bank and hold us there for the enraged magistrates.

Williams lined the crew aft and talked to them for about forty seconds. In that time he told them he had nothing to offer but good wages and plenty of work, with the chance of their necks getting pulled by hemp if they stayed with him; but he would put down in the log that they were pressed men—which might do them some good. All who were willing to chance it, one step to the front.

One man stepped out. Raikes.

"I want at least eight men. Four pounds a month and five pounds bonus," he said.

Three more stepped out, one of them Raulson, the cook, who had been caught in the general shanghai-ing.

The other four were forcibly selected.

"We'll be in Broome in two weeks," he said carelessly, encouragingly.

There was never another captain like him. I have heard about many, read of some and sailed with a few. He always did most of the work. He would do almost

anything but cook and scrub. He was all over the ship at all hours of the day and night, below and aloft, adjusting, inspecting, measuring.

Men said he was crazy. Perhaps that was because he never gave the wiliest a chance to soldier. He was a slave-driver and crank. Everything must be tidy and stout, veritably shipshape.

But there was method in his madness. When a reward is on a skipper's head every inch of canvas must catch wind and pull, every line, brace and clew hold, the running rigging render, and the standing rigging stand.

Williams had them break out a hundred-fathom hawser; and, bending an end to the kinghtheads, tumbled a dozen men—including the three watchmen, loosened from their bonds to assist their charge in running away from them—into the Chinese punt, and, getting in himself, revolver in hand, they rowed out to warp the ship on her way.

Raikes and another fellow who knew his fingers from a gasket were working aloft, making ready to sheet home, soon as we could catch the wind. A good land breeze usually came up about this time; and soon as Williams rounded a sand-bar that lay across the *Lady Betty's* bow —his fishing-lines had made good leads to give him soundings—he came, swimming and pulling himself along the hawser, on board and shook out the canvas, then took the wheel himself. But he kept that boat-load of towers at the end of the hawsers, and pulling.

They had warning to keep that hawser tight or a rifle would open on them; and if they cast off and tried to escape some of them would be shot. There wasn't much light, but they were frightened.

A mile or more out when the wind freshened stiffly

we came atop them, and a frightened lot they were. Williams took back the four pressed men, who looked as if they might be, or be made into, sailors and turned the others loose to make their way to land. Against the tide they would not be able to reach land and give the alarm for four or five hours.

So the *Lady Betty* was off, but there was no rest for the weary. Not even for me, who bemoaned my flour-barrel half full of good inspiriting liquor left on shore. Not even for Davenant, who found that an owner didn't amount to much on a ship with Williams as skipper. Ours was certainly a piratical-looking ship if ever one went to sea, or rather piratical-acting.

A fellow was found who said he knew how to steer. He did a bit. Davenant was given a revolver and told to shoot him if he left that wheel or if any other man came on to the poop. Davenant sat on a case of rifles and took the situation composedly; and Miss Davenant refused to go below. Perhaps she was a bit alarmed. More likely, I came to know her a little better—she was fascinated by the grim romance of it all, the eery feeling of danger, the slapping and dash and oaths of the men at work in the darkness.

The ship was light ballasted, a little too light in fact, but he put on every yard of canvas that could be hung; and working in the dark on a strange ship it was no child's play to run out booms and clew down the studding-sails. And it was practically useless to give orders, for Raikes, Hawkins and I were about the only ones who knew what they meant. Hawkins could no more go aloft than he could go through the eye of a needle; but he was as good as a windlass.

It was a foolish thing to carry so much sail with a

worthless crew, for if a blow had hit us we would have been left to swim for it. But Williams was in a hurry. The fellow wasn't human when it came to work.

There was no division into watches. The men slept on the decks, and I with them, jumping up—it seemed—every ten minutes to pull here and slacken there. Straight south we headed, which certainly wasn't toward Broome. He expected that he would be searched for in that direction.

I wish I might have nothing to remember of the next few weeks. I had heard of the Tasmanian sea, but it was my first meeting with it. None of us had been there before. I did my best to be seasick and some succeeded better than I. Except for the strain and danger it would have been unpleasantly amusing.

The brig bobbed along like a drunken sailor in an earthquake. We carried too much sail, and the *Lady Betty* was light-headed anyway; and we were caught in the ragged ends of the great waves that roll endlessly below Tasmania, waves that stormlessly rise to forty and fifty feet, and I have heard various liars estimate their length. A hundred miles, say some. As if they knew. There is nothing to stop either the waves or the liars.

And though we made headway in fine shape it seemed as if we were plowing through a war of mill-races. We bobbed like an egg-shell in a tub of boiling water; and were close-hauled at that. And because I was supposed to know how to steer, Williams shortly after dawn gave the wheel to me, snarling, "Full-and-by."

The forecastle was awash, and it looked to me as if the *Lady Betty* was doing her best to head on for the bottom. Frustrated again and again, she dipped her nose under, and I would swear that I felt the rudder clear

a time or two. The ballast wasn't right in the first place, and to take our thoughts from other troubles it shifted, and the star-board rail was awash.

That was too much for even Williams. Besides, we had raised land, and were well out of the path of the Bass Strait shipping. Sail was taken in forward and aft, and we drifted along under the mainsail; but it did not help much. The crank seemed determined to go to the bottom; if she couldn't go on her head she would go on her weather side. But there wasn't a chance. If she was too light to sail she was too light to sink, though she was about two-thirds under water a third of the time.

All about us and over the deck the sea boiled, churned and streaked. The water ran around over the deck as if looking for a low coaming to climb over.

With my bare toes gripping the grating I reflected that the law-abider has all the best of it. He has too. He may not have so much that is interesting to remember in his old age—but he stands a better chance of reaching old age.

Still, after a fashion we went on. Raulson, the cook, his long mustache adroop pathetically, brought me a can of coffee. I was touched by this attention—prematurely; for he whispered to know if I did not have a bit of bottle stowed some place.

I assured him that I did—in one of his fire-holes. He said that I did not. He had helped himself to a bottle or so when I wasn't looking; but later when he had gone for more, barrel and all had vanished.

"Then Williams spotted it," I said to myself wonderingly.

Raulson tried to tell me the story of his life, probably seeking some sort of confessional and absolution, for he

was convinced that the crazy buoy which some fool had named a *Lady* was never to reach land.

But there was the land off our port bow. Whole piles of it, rock-ribbed and lined with beaches as if they had been the burial ground for enormous giants, whose bones the vulturous waves had picked. The white-bodied, black-tipped albatross snooped friendily about as if to inspect us. They seemed to know that we were in a mess, and were disdainful of our company.

After inspection they floated off with broad, contemptuous flaps. Some sailors say they bring good luck; and I suppose when they wheel away they carry it with them.

Pigeons flocked overhead, bound northward as if to tell where the *Lady Betty* was. Fish would have made better messengers, as they could see more of her. It was chilly, too, with the wind from the tropics at our back. I could barely peep from my swollen eye.

Williams came up the companion and stood for a time slowly turning around the horizon. His face was worn. The muscles from his bare neck and jaw were tight, tense, standing out like braided leather. He looked at me, seemed to recognize me as somebody he knew and said bitterly:

"We're short of food. If you think this is bad, wait."

It happened that plenty of provisions had been placed on the *Lady Betty*, but after she got into litigation the perishables were removed. And Williams had scant chance of provisioning a ship, especially in that part of the world. If he put into port he would likely be nabbed. All of us would be nabbed.

There are some things even worse than starving. I

have my doubts, however, about a more distressing condition than thirst, my kind of a thirst.

Miss Davenant came on deck. She must have been having a time of it, for she was very pale. Seasickness makes a woman look her worst; but it hadn't succeeded with her. Her face was thin and peaked. But she was neat. Her black hair was brushed and caught low on the sides of her head and pendent earrings—green—swung defiantly from her half-hidden ears. She wore a long cloak. I was ignored.

She braced herself against the boom and stared forward. I watched her and learned nothing; merely confirmed the former impression that she was beautiful without looking at all like other beautiful women. Her face was too thin and uneven to be pretty, theoretically. There was a strangeness about it, as if the Maker of Women had fashioned a new type.

She had the quietness and poise that are disconcerting to me, the impenetrableness of one who lives behind a mask. She was watching the men housing the masts, or seemed to be. I came to know that she seldom watched any but one man.

Williams was after a beach to careen. It seemed to me, gazing at the hard, rocky cliffs, that he might as well have been looking for a dry spot on the ocean's floor. The scenic effect was splendid and disquieting.

The west coast of Tasmania was, and probably still is, wild and unsettled. Perhaps it was then wild as when the first Dutchman found it, and scarcely more visited. Gunboats or steamers would never search for Williams there, because no man of sense would buck the Tasmanian seas in a wind-jammer.

South of Tasmania the great waves roll on, always

toward the east. And Williams was supposed to want to beat his way westward. He would never have gone down in those seas to do it.

There is no use in telling what I thought. Williams did find a beach, exposed it is true, and very different from the long, gentle, hard slopes of the Samoans. It served his purpose. With men in boats casting leads and leading the way, he went up through a narrow channel of giants' bones at high tide; and then—we worked like dogs, like the convicts themselves formerly thrown on to the island and girdled with bloodhounds.

Breaming and boot-topping, Raikes called it—the cleaning of the *Lady Betty's* stomach. I called it something different. I raided the medicine-chest and found three bottles of whisky and some other stuff that smelled and tasted a little alcoholic. But it did not go far.

Chipping barnacles and smearing tallow and pounding copper is the sort of work bad sailors have to do when they die. Those who have had as much of it as men do who sailed with Williams will sit in heavenly taverns and work jaw-tackle, and the slated accounts will be wiped out by an invisible sponge.

I passed the bottles around—when Williams wasn't looking. He probably knew. There was little he didn't know about what went on; but there were times when he did not care what else was done as long as work went on.

Work did go on. He did most of it. Tireless and short-tongued, he kept at it—and kept us at it. The *Lady Betty* lost her name, but unfortunately not her sex. I don't believe she ever belonged to the A. B. A. *O. P. Jones* could never have acted like that. She became the *Sally Martin,* and was freshened with white paint; and black gun-ports were painted on. That was the usual

trick of Williams. If hailed he would sing out that he was bound for or leaving some Chinese port. Painted ports were as good as guns in keeping off the pirates in Chinese waters, if they didn't come too close.

As usual, again, when he had got hold of a ship known to the authorities, he set about disguising her completely, and the brig was re-rigged into a fore-and-after. For one thing she would be easier manned; for another the *Lady Betty* had never any business being a hermaphrodite brig. Most important, however, was the disguise.

Williams was sailmaker, carpenter, bosun and captain all in one. From dark to dawn he worked.

It would not be truthful to say that the men came to like him. People never liked Williams. He seemed always repressedly truculent. He was seldom in a rage, and then was very quiet about it; but appeared always on the verge of blowing up. His temper was dangerous, but it was not a noisy temper. The fellows did admire him as well as fear him. He drove brutally but impersonally. And there were no favorites, which disappointed me.

Little Raikes was a surprise. Without having anybody give him the authority he gradually assumed the position of mate—and kept it. He would not have kept it had he not been a worker himself. He was, and a good one. He couldn't have done more if he had an interest in the boat.

But why, I wondered. I tried to talk with him. He had nothing to say. He did not appear to retain a grudge against me.

I would have given much of what little I had to know what he had overheard from his place under the

bunk. But he denied having heard anything. This world is full of liars.

Hawkins, hearty and less awkward than he looked, did much to keep the fellows' spirits up; or rather to keep them from going lower. We lay under a wall of rock that had been broken and splintered as if from a Titan's hammer, and the sun did not touch us until afternoon, when he struck glittering and warmless; and falling farther westward, threw a dazzling sheen from the black wet rocks as if the rays struck mirrors.

At low tide the green-gray and blackened bulk of the larger boulders was exposed, cluttered with shell and weed-growth, and making the scene even more somber than when the tide had thrust itself up and around the sand, nosing between rocks and overspreading like a sentient invader. There was nothing to buoy the spirit in that drear, forlorn place, as for instance in warmer seas where sky and water and rocks wear colors, and flower-studded foliage thrusts out with prodigal eagerness to give radiance to the eyes; where the huge-topped coconuts droop their feathery leaves, and a soft warm purple haze lies like a misty mantle over the distant islands.

Here we lay at the foot of a bleak, wet cliff; over the brow shrubs and trees bent, many with roots adangle and groping as if frantically trying to save themselves from being crowded off and over. The forest above and behind us was impenetrable, thickly overgrown and matted with a hardy plant-life that had little of the generous nut-bearing and flower-offerings of the tropic foliage.

As the men worked their blows were cast back with hollow echoes from the cliff, and lifted voices returned

to them with mocking repetition. Too, there was the disquieting fact of being about work against their wills; bound on a voyage to—they knew not where; and likely to suffer, they knew not what.

Moreover, there was not all anybody wanted to eat. Salt meat and biscuits, with a tincture of potato, now and then the flavor of boiled ham, and occasionally some canned stuff, with, as a special rarity, a bite of cheese, were about all we had. Coffee and tea were ready at all hours; and Williams said that they should be hot. They were.

Davenant had to eat the same fare. That made it taste a little better to the rest of us; and it made the work a bit lighter to me to discover him working a bit.

I overheard Williams telling him that he could, if he preferred, do no work; in which case he could tighten his belt for his breakfast. Davenant flared, and when he used up much of his temper he found the proposition unaltered. He protested that he was the owner; and was told—

"You are merely a fellow thief."

The fact that Davenant did not own the *Lady Betty,* no matter how honest his original intentions may have been, put him in much the same state of piracy with Williams, and he had to earn his berth.

Miss Davenant moved about in a kind of stately isolation. She did not complain. She seemed interested. She watched with a sort of tense breathlessness when there was some hard, dangerous work going on; and most of the day alone, remote, she spent on deck and was somehow always out of the way.

Occasionally she would speak to some one of the men briefly, impersonally, just a word, a question; and

maybe smile. But the smile meant nothing except a frank reward. Yet I wondered if she knew how much she did toward making the work easier for an hour or two. It is strange how much women do know.

I watched her at all times when I could steal a view. So quiet and so purposeful she seemed in her inaction.

There was nothing fretful in her attitude, no sour petulance, and still no lowering of reserve; and whatever I may have of intuition told me that she was a woman who had no scruples and no innocence; yet she was pleasant-voiced, steady of eyes.

"A daughter of the devil," I repeated to myself, pleased with the alliteration and offering myself an explanation of the markedly strange personality that was not, for all of her reserve—or perhaps was heightened by it—without a certain deep, evasive, sinister suggestion.

I had not altogether heard her speak a hundred words; I had seen her, except for the minute or two in the light of the candle the first time we met, only in attitudes that were undistinctive. But there was something strange, fierce, audacious, inside of her that looked out through her black eyes—eyes black as if darkened by veils to hide the woman crouched alertly, patiently, behind the mask.

She ignored me altogether. Probably because without looking directly at me she knew that I watched her. Such detection is a gift peculiarly feminine.

Williams by neither word, gesture nor glance seemed to know that she was on the boat. But her eyes when he was on deck were seldom off him.

CHAPTER IV

THE WRONG MAN STUMBLES HELLWARD

O P. JONES himself, had he not departed this troublous life and perhaps come into certain ghostly advantages, could not have recognized the *Sally Martin* when she was re-rigged. If one did not know her with that disillusioning intimacy that comes from putting a paint-brush over her timbers, a good opinion might have been formed of her. She looked all right. But the feel of her was disquieting. From keelson to truck, from forecastle to cabin, from stem to rudder, she was worked over.

Trim and safe and speedy was her appearance. Her bow was sharp and her buttocks tumbled home sharply. It was probably because of her lines that she had been kidnapped in the first place.

Williams had an eye for boat-beauty, as other men have for the next most feminine thing, a woman.

I have a preference for the ark-like ship, high out of the water; and if it needs two guesses to tell her stern from her bow, I like her the better. She may ride the sea like a sailor on horseback and be stupid at her helm, but she won't be headstrong and full of the devil.

Sally Martin was reasonably behaved while she lay on the beach, turning from one side to the other like a lazy lady in the hands of slaves. But we had to take her out unballasted, stern on.

And she objected. She was warped first in one direction, then the other, for rocks were all about; and there was no chance to turn her around on the boulder-bound beach. She had been practically embayed by rocks.

She hung back and tugged like a calf at the end of a rope. She was indignant at being hauled out by her heels. Finding herself unable to shake her bow loose from a running hawser that played over her stem, she swayed from side to side, determined to smash her hull timbers.

She nearly succeeded, too. She did succeed in getting stuck, coming against a rock—but too gently to serve her purpose, being held by the pay of the cable over her bow. Nothing was damaged but some twelve hours of time.

It was almost impossible and it was dangerous to lie at work near that beach. The surf swirled and leaped, the waves—thick-bodied and high-crested—smote the rocks and flung their spray as if tossed upward from giant hands; and the surface of the water was boiling foam.

We took on rock ballast and stowed it—under Williams's eyes—and overlaid the ballast with timber. Our hands were torn and raw, our backs ached, our hearts were heavy, our stomachs light. There were no watches and no sleep, for when the sun went down lanterns came out.

A dozen times a day almost any one of the men could have killed Williams; he was back to them and often head down, working hard, harder than any. Something more than fear of him held them to a weary dog's life.

Perhaps they realized that without him there would be small chance of getting off the desolate coast; but that was less true than that they admired him, even

though they hated him. I hated him myself. Hawkins, puffing like that well-known puffer, the porpoise, said that he would personally add a pound or so to the reward for his capture—he was that tired of work. We talked disconsolately of the half-filled flour-barrel I had stowed in the fire-hole.

Williams in almost every turn and move disclosed a remarkable knowledge of work. He seemed to know even the weight of a stone at a glance; in the same way he seemed to know measurements and capacities; and without a moment's hesitation he could tell what and how to do anything about shipwork.

He showed no apparent attention toward anybody. A man might be dying without Williams saying a word to him. He noticed though. Try malingering and one would see how quickly he noticed. I had seen him stay by a sick native all night. Also I saw him send white men, tottering from weariness, to bear a hand at heavy hauling. He was heartless.

But at the first sign of weakness from him every man on the ship would have instantly become sick. I should have. I would gladly have lain down on a deathbed just for the chance of a bit of rest; but not at the risk of being yanked up by the ears.

Fresh water, tea and coffee, we had in plenty. Wood was the only thing we found on the island to carry away. It had been cut above the cliff and thrown down. Some of the men had thought about running away, but they were wisely afraid of taking to the strange forest with no station or settlement on the coast. But with plenty of wood our condensers filled casks as fast as they were emptied.

At last we sailed, dropping away before a light, steady

wind that blew south, and when we had plenty of sea-room we changed course and began beating northward.

Naturally we got into rough weather, for nothing else could be expected with a dozen Jonahs aboard. Cold slatey clouds came low in the heavens. The rain swept us like a fusillade. The winds boomed and thundered. Each time we went about we were nearly capsized.

We bucked a heavy sea for two days and a night, with me at the helm most of the night—or it seemed like it anyway—and I was so soused with coffee that I could not sleep for another day and night.

Williams was on deck practically all of the time. I swear what sleep he got was standing, eyes open, on the weather side, staring into the rigging. He was stubborn as Vanderdecken. Whether, like that Dutchman, always beaten back at the Cape, he had cursed God, I do not know; but he never cursed man, wind, sea or luck. He was a lunatic. One of the kind that seldom fails at anything to which his will is set.

It was hell, I was sober; and we were bearing for the Bass Strait. Not even a miracle would take us through without being sighted. But why care? Besides, nobody would expect Williams to sail in that direction.

I went to him. I could stand it no longer. He was working with a book of sailing-directions before him—sailing-directions for the lower coast of China, Java and the Malay Peninsula, and he ponderingly made notations which he afterward wrote into a virgin log-book.

I was desperate.

"Listen," I said. "I don't care anything about where we are going. I don't care anything about what we have to eat. And the other men are about the same. But we want something to drink and we have to have some sleep.

There's not going to be anything left but ghosts to work your ship for you if this keeps up."

"Did the forecastle send you?"

"No. And I've got too much sense to admit it if they did."

Without a word he got up, unlocked a sea-chest, lifted the lid. There was bottle on bottle of rum and gin.

A gleam, that I may have misinterpreted as a gleam of amusement, was in his eyes as he said, jerking phrases out, that I had forgotten it. That he had had it sent down to the beach in the wagon.

That liquor was always good for trade—implying with a glance and a gesture. "If I can keep your hands off it." He said, however, that I could help myself the day I found out what Davenant and the woman were after at Dakaru.

"And why does she stare at me?" he snapped, as if I had something to do with it.

"Does she?" My voice was innocence itself.

"Her eyes are like beaks."

I had no sense to say it, but words were always slipping out—truthful words.

"I think them more like black opals."

His answer was a short, throaty growl. A pause. Then he spoke harshly:

"Raikes knows. I don't want to hang him up by the thumbs. He's a good sailor. Not to be trusted—bad shipmate. But *you* find out. A woman always talks—if she's giving away somebody's secret."

"Now listen, Skipper," I pleaded. "Just a nip or two, you know. You can't expect a sober man to talk to a woman like that."

I must have mistaken that gleam that I had seen in

his eyes. It wasn't amusement. It was anger. It came back again, and words with it. He did not raise his voice. His words were hard and dry, and snapped like the breaking of sticks:

I was a drunken wastrel. A club to drive and a bottle to lure were the things that had an influence on me. But at least I didn't have the mark of Judas in my hand. Find out why they were going to Dakaru—and I could get drunk, drunk like the beast I like to be. Williams said:

"I know why I am going to Dakaru."

"Grahame?"

"Yes, Grahame. But not what you think."

And I didn't know what to think by the way he said it.

But I must find out what they were up to. Davenant, he said, was dark and deep and sinister.

"Coldly evil," were the words, and he put meaning into them. So much meaning that a nervous little thrill ran through me.

"The woman——"

He did not finish. I knew he felt the curse of the serpent was on all women. But no matter who they were or what they wanted, he, Williams, would take them as promised to Dakaru.

It was true that an outlaw's word was all he had left.

Something made him hate the world and the people in it. Out of my own meager knowledge of him I knew how unfailingly he had been deceived, abused, had treachery come at him, every time he trusted a white man.

I knew what rumor said of his past: how women, and one whom he loved, had used perjury to bring him to the gallows; and how he had been hanged and buried alive

(one report had it that a dummy had been buried instead; in quick lime, too) by convict laborers who furtively kept him from being smothered until they could secretly dig him out.

Strangely enough, rumor said that she was dark, black-eyed—beautiful—and vain. A tenfold revenge had smitten her a few years later when a native girl, jealous, hacked her face with a knife; and the pretty strumpet died of bleeding vanity. The background of the life of the man known as Hurricane Williams was tragic; and who could have sanity with such memory-ghosts haunting the brain? Or trust women?

"Hawkins," I said as we leaned against the galley, "you've made a sighing furnace of many a woman. Tell me, how do you win their confidence?"

Hawkins extended a mandatory hand. Extended it with the careless authority of one exercising an immemorial prerogative. I gave him my pouch. He filled a diminutive cask that he used as a pipe-bowl, and blew a cloud of smoke at the masthead. Sentimental reminiscence overspread his massive face.

"Women; women," he said deeply. Paused. "Ah, women!"

A reflective pause.

"But you can't tell, though. Blue-eyed uns—ah, what liars! Brown-eyed uns—so hurt if you don't b'lieve 'em when you know they're lyin'! Black uns—you can't tell nothin' about 'em any more 'an the others. If only I had a little somethin' to swallow! Talkin' o' women; thirsty work.

"Give me a bouncing, black-eyed lass;
Give me a deep an' steaming glass,

When I'm back from the ocean's roll.
Aye, give me a broad low tavern bench,
An' the soft white arms of a black-eyed wench,
And the devil can have my soul!"

"Mercy," I said. "How cheap our fat *Faustus* holds his soul!"

Hawkins grunted impersonally.

"He's got it anyway. Can't meet a woman an' not give your soul to the devil."

Very meditatively:

"Yes. If she's a saint, deeper his claws get into it. I've met 'em east and west, when I was drunk and when I wished I was. I've had 'em lie an' I've had 'em talk straight, and you can't tell the difference. So when you meet the saint, you think she's like the others."

"The saint?" I said insinuatingly, lifting my brows.

It was something new to find this fleshy bulk sentimental. I had the impression that it would be diverting, though just yet he was a little too earnest to be laughed at. Earnest people may be mocked. But even when they are ponderously fat it is poor sport.

Why shouldn't the distress of women's love hurt a fat man as much as a lean? Is his belly a buckler for his heart, so that while we mock the heavily armored man that's pinked, we cry out over the wounds of the naked gladiator?

"No, friend Burly Ben," I said to myself; "though tears roll down your hilly cheeks I'll be sympathetic—for I enjoy the sad tales of fat men."

"I was young once," said Hawkins. "But al'us had a good sheath of flesh for my soul. I danced a merry jig to a woman's tongue an' bent my back to hones' work. But she wanted to go hellward with a greasy-haired

gambler. Told me I was a fool not to know a woman wanted somethin' better 'an a home an' a cradle to jiggle with her foot.

"An' I was never young again. . . . God, if I only had somethin' to drink! . . .

"Well sir, I met 'em east an' I met 'em west. Near as I c'd tell, they was all like her. Then one day I met a blue-eyed un. 'Frisco. Said she loved me, an' I said:

" ' 'Course you do. I got a sack o' dollars.'

" 'Don't spend 'em,' she said. 'Let's buy a patch o' ground an' raise veg'tables an' get rich.'

"But I called for another bottle. I was drunk for a week, an' she never three feet away. I was too soused to know she stayed sober to keep other people's fingers out o' my pocket.

"There was a fight. Somebody poked a gun in my hand, an' I killed him. . . . God, if I could only get somethin' to drink I wouldn't tell all this! . . . ."

I said nothing. I watched him as a skeptic beholds the dead rise. He puffed like a man at work. He was throwing something off his conscience. Somehow in the conversation he had stumbled, and was falling headlong into confidence. He couldn't check himself. He went on:

"When I come to, she was in jail with a lie down an' sworn to. Said she done it. They let me see her. The fools, ought 'o killed me.

" 'Why? Why?' I said. She smiled. You know how they smile—just so they've got what they want. She smiled like that. 'Boy, I love you.' Just that."

There were tears dripping down that big, ugly face.

These men, these men that one meets right and left! Grimy and evil and drunken, gargoyles and satyrs; if

only they had skylights in the breasts! But the One who looks down sees anyway perhaps. Perhaps, too, He loves his outcasts best of all.

" 'Boy, I love you.' To me."

He dropped his hands—palms open—in a sort of gesture to show how empty he was of anything worth anybody's love.

"I done my best, but they said I was only tryin' to save her. Save her—why, I thought she was like the others till it was too late. She was always kissin' me an' had 'er fingers in my hair. I thought her just more eager 'an most to fool me.

"Her name was a bad one. I guess they can love like the others. Maybe the firs' un loved her greasy-haired gambler.

"She said: 'Wait for me. I'll be out soon.' I said I would. I meant it. God, I never meant anything like I meant that! But I wandered around, got a long way off, an' other things come up. I'd curse myself all day—if I'd think of it—for not goin' back.

"At last I turned up. She'd been out over a year an' was dead. Somebody'd broke her head with a bottle. A woman, it was. So I couldn't do nothin'. I'd 'a' killed a man—just so—I don't know—so her ghost would've known I wasn't the kind that forgot everything, anyway."

All hands were being roused. We were to go about on the starboard tack; and without a word of parting Hawkins and I separated to go to our stations.

As I went toward the poop I glanced up. The sun was going down through a gray mist that belted the horizon, and gloom like a vapor seemed lifting itself from the water. Sunset in wet clouds is a dismal hour.

Above me stood Miss Davenant, looking out to sea—

at nothing. Her long black cape was half-blown back and exposed a vivid crimson lining. Tall, braced to the wind, motionless, she was more of a symbolism at that moment than a woman. And the black cape was lined with red. Was that symbolic too?

I went directly past her. She turned slightly and glanced at me as if I had been merely a noise that attracted her notice—as if I simply were not there. There was nothing of the artificiality of pretending to ignore me; her thoughts were elsewhere.

I spoke in passing. "The sun's making a stupid death-scene to-night, isn't he?"

A little look of surprise—surprise; nothing more—no shade of hostility—leaped into her eyes for a moment. Her smile was slight.

"I like it," she said. And added: "Oh, immensely."

She turned to westward as she spoke, then glanced at me.

Before I could speak again, Williams appeared—he had a habit of doing that; not coming, but appearing. He shouted and I jumped.

In the course of the next few minutes' work I was too busied to watch her.

A man passed me. I spoke to him as Raikes. He turned. In the twilight I saw that it was not Raikes but a fellow known as Tom Gibson. He had two good eyes, but he wore a blue cotton shirt with a daub of tar near the middle of the back. It was Raikes's shirt and fitted Gibson.

He gave me a hand the same as if he had been Raikes, and went on forward.

"McGuire," said Williams, "take the wheel for the first watch. Raikes'll have the deck. Keep a gun where

you can use it—out of sight. Look out for him. I must pretend to trust him. Wish I could."

He turned away. But I, within his cabin, cast a longing look toward the chest.

"Skipper, for the sad confidence of a fat man, I ought to have a nip—or two. Hawkins opened up. I'm not coaxing when I say he shook me a bit. He's got another secret too. I'll get that by and by—why he took on with you. He's dropped hints that make me think he knows Dakaru. Too much of a liar to admit it. No, he didn't lie this afternoon about that woman with the blue eyes. Listen."

I repeated Hawkins's story; ending:

"And his words aren't what rammed a hole in my chest. Maybe the girl was drunk when she confessed, and crazily—as women do—stuck to it sober. But it's the year and more after she came out. Drinking, you know, with every man off the sea; and asking each if he knew Ben Hawkins. Half-breathless for the answer. Looking up at every step. Peering at faces in the alleyways—eager. Trying not to believe that he didn't care. Setting her teeth to faith that he at least had decency to be grateful. Drinking to keep up hope. Quarreling because she was having a fight inside herself. Getting sloppier, blearier, and losing that hope. He was like all the others, she said to herself. And sinking into death under the crack of an empty beer-bottle—with a sigh of relief.

"Women like her, and men like him, feel and have pain the same as—the same as—— I don't know much about God, but I'd rather go to Him, drunken, dirty, eaten out with sin, like that woman than like one that

never told a lie to save the man she loved. An' I've got to have a drink!"

As I talked, Williams stood, legs slightly apart, his brows contracted, his eyes glaring in that habitually crazed listening manner of his, and awaited the end. He always appeared to resent conversation not pertinent to immediate work. His attitude, never putting me at ease, was disturbing to strangers. Few—none—understood him. Some—for there is a streak in men that takes up every challenge of manner, no matter from whom—were at once truculent. Let the biggest man alive put a chip on his shoulder, and it will be impudently knocked off. Williams, not wholly unconsciously, wore a chip. Most people, either cautious or sensible, not necessarily timid, gave him headway.

I ignored his manner; though not his words. Commands were things he meant. He was not a bully. And when he gave his loyalty, his friendship, his word, not the combined admiralties of the world could frighten or fight him out of it.

"Too much imagination," Williams snapped angrily.

I had talked of a woman.

"I'm a mummy inside, Skipper."

He said that when he gave me a drink it would mean a ration for every man. I told him for the love of Heaven give it then. That he had a crew of walking dead men, too tired and hopeless even to mutter.

It was largely true. The men did not know Williams, did not know the rewards of keeping faith with him—that is, of having him keep faith with them; and so they were morally beaten, broken; no heart was left in them. The gibbet dangled before their eyes, and not a glint of pirate gold thrilled them for the great chance.

He perhaps did not hear what I said, or hearing gave it not so much as a thought. A wounded man he would nurse on his own knee; but a man dying of overwork—he didn't appear to recognize any such death.

I was given two quarts of gin. I took them to Raulson, and word was passed. Nobody believed it, but all came. I, lying a bit, told Raulson they were from the skipper because he was satisfied with the way the men worked; and, as I intended that he should, Raulson repeated that. It was like a distribution of medals.

Not that it made the men love Williams. Far from it. It livened them up—the nip and praise—to damning him for thinking to buy them cheaply; but they did not mean the damning so much as they had meant the silence.

And I, watching and listening from a little distance apart, turned too late to get a drink for myself. Raulson emptied the second bottle of the half-pint remaining when all had been served—except myself. He was humble, and could afford to be, since three times his share was warming his stomach. I cursed to the tune that Hawkins was singing interminably in the forecastle:

"Come, all you brave sailors, an' listen to me.
I'll tell you a yarn o' the *Mary Magee,*
An' how she went down with her whole com-
panee——"

There is nothing that sucks at my bones like loneliness, when I am sober. The marrow goes out of them and I want to crumple like a used rope.

It is a horrible thing for a man to be thrown on himself with nothing to think about but himself. Particularly when it is dark, black, and the boat drives on, moaning and complaining, and the wind is hissing as from clenched teeth.

A small aura of light, not unlike a saint's wreath of beams, spread from the binnacle and gave a little magic shelter to my—not fears, but the something in me that hates the dark. Vague blurs of white splotched the darkness at the points I knew sails were forward. The mizzen leaning out on the larboard was more visible, and something like a great protective wing. I wished it might fold me, hide me, let me sleep indefinitely, and awaken when— But why awaken at all?

The sea bumped and hissed, not ferociously, but displeased. Behind us the water closed fussily in our wake, a sibilant chorus of froth. Too much imagination, as Williams had said.

I felt we were followed by ghosts, bodiless, impalpable, but hissing in a certain weak, futile fury. Among them would certainly be a blue-eyed ghost with an empty beer-bottle—and blood-covered hair.

Davenant, stiff and aloof, seemed to want loneliness. He had taken the air for a few minutes and gone. He was more unbending than ever of late. Nursing, perhaps, his injury from Williams's tongue. It had been reckless, crazy, of him to turn for even only a short time a man like Davenant to work.

Not because there was anything degrading about the work, but because Davenant was Davenant. Davenant was polite in the way of a man who seems a little startled when there is a call for his attention; as when I spoke to him. A casual, "Good evening." A pause; a cool modulated, distant, but polite, "Good evening" came back.

There was something about him that seemed awkwardness without being any such thing. A kind of angularity perhaps, such as inordinately self-contained people

have. Davenant had gone—back to his shadows. He seemed to like them.

The devil has a throne of fire, but it is hid in shadows; perhaps if Davenant sat on that throne in his absence the devil might wander up and down the earth without being missed. Again, too much imagination. Looking straight at Davenant, I could see nothing of the satanic features in him; but his reflection in my memory made me wonder which image it was, his or a childhood trophy of reminiscence about the devil?

Satan was proud too. Some saint once had him by the nose, 'twixt hot tongs. I couldn't remember which one, if I ever knew. Williams would have been such a saint as that.

Somehow there wasn't anything incongruous to me in thinking of Williams as a saint that might have been; some of those old warrior saints must have been crazy, intense, resolute as he. Imagination—too much of it.

Raikes came with the slow step of importance out of the darkness. He came up and stooped over the binnacle. He was talkative. He talked as he looked at the card. Everything was going fine, he said, or something like it. But if he had the ship he would lay his course a little nearer the middle of the strait. No use hovering in sight of land.

I silently remarked how long his nose was; his unshaven face was covered with a substance that looked more like fur than hair. Splotched, too. The blind eye—I had an impression that it wasn't really blind. He simply didn't need it. Perhaps he could see with it in the dark—just open it and close the other, and cat-like look about.

He was mate now, he said. There was a grin like a sneer, too. Was the man drunk? He knew ships and,

the sea, he did. No, Williams had not *said* he was mate, but given him the work and a berth aft.

Williams—Hurricane Williams— "How did he get such a bluster of fame?" The question wasn't sincere. Yet Raikes seemed to think Williams wasn't entitled to it—to the fear of men.

"I had a ship once," Raikes began. Liar.

On he went, lying. He laid a dozen men in gore, or maybe only one or two, but spoke of them with that swaggering tone that makes dozens, not individuals, the unit. He would get another ship one of these days—a woman had lost his first for him. Well—on he went.

What was in the air to make men talk of past women this day? Was I turned father confessor to a ship of pirates?

I crooked an arm about a spoke and loosened the holster inside my shirt. Raikes was a little too amiable. Suppose he wanted to step behind me. Mate? It was queer. I was at the wheel to kill the mate if——

Something had set Raikes dreaming about a ship he never had. Perhaps a lugger, or maybe only a jolly-boat stolen when nobody was looking. He might be drunk. Other things than sweet biting rum will make men drunk. Other things besides women—so I have heard.

He was speaking of the woman. I couldn't remember what he said at first, or how he brought her in. It wasn't of the woman that had lost him his ship. It was of the one on our ship.

I gave him both ears, but he had nothing to say that was important. The importance was in the way he said it. As if there were intimacy between them. Aye, yes! He knew her secret. Davenant's too.

That *would* make for a feeling of intimacy.

He had never seen a woman like her. Well, few men had.

The wind changed slightly and he hurried forward. I could see nothing. My eyes, from gazing at the binnacle, were accustomed to light, so that when I looked into the darkness I was little better than blinded. My ears seem blinded, too, for the first I knew of her presence was her voice.

"Don't you ever sleep?" she asked with that simulated flattering interest that is the preliminary of an intruding woman. Not that she was intruding.

She still wore the long black cape, a sort of robe of invisibility—for night anyway. The night was her element. There seemed a kinship, a sistership, between them. Perhaps my nerves were raveled.

She came close enough to be touched by my aura. Stronger light gave distinctness to the irregularity of her face but dimness softened the outlines—not the expression—of the face. It was not a soft face, but pretty; a certain evil prettiness.

There is nothing more irresistible—to some men. I am one. The ocean's bottom is paved with bones of others.

There are men who hate women because they can't help loving them—the women. I can help it; nothing like Hawkins's blue-eyed ghost haunts me. But this isn't of my affairs; so it is more to the point to say Williams could perhaps help loving them, too. But he seemed simply not to see them. That may be the coward's way out, but it is the safest a brave man can take.

Miss Davenant—Raikes had said a quarter of an hour before that her name was Dula. How did he know?

—Miss Davenant talked friendly. I could tell that she was not talking about what she wanted. Her lips moved easily and she smiled, but her eyes remained coldly steady. I felt that the veils of those eyes had been pulled aside, that I was looking at the woman—the other woman inside of her. But one might as well look from one sphinx to another.

My tongue must have tripped unsteadily, for though talking is one of the things I do with the greatest ease she made me uncomfortable. If I had not looked at her eyes I wouldn't have minded; though also I was wondering what she really wanted. Why on deck so late to talk to me?

Bluntly it came:

"You would do anything for *him,* wouldn't you?"

Strange, but I knew to whom she referred, though his name had not been mentioned. Strange too, but it seemed the other woman—the other sphinx that lurked behind her eyes—speaking. I had an impression that she spoke through motionless lips, as if it was an actual voice from within. I evaded her face, and fastened mine to the card.

A warning subtlety suffused me. At times I feel myself very clever. Guided a little, too, by her poised fierceness, the fierceness of eyes and voice, I surmised that she had no sympathy with doing anything for Williams.

For one thing, he had humiliated her father. I had no reason then for not supposing that Davenant was some one else. For a more important thing, Williams had treated her as if her cloak did actually confer invisibility; and, in my experience, nothing more enrages a woman than being ignored.

She was not the cold creature of her seeming—of her poised appearance. I had only a few hours before made one slight friendly advance, and here she was back seeking to talk with me, to share a certain familiarity of opinion.

"Do anything for him?" I half-snarled. "Why should I? I never sleep, you say. How can I? Work and blows, damn him!"

If she were surprised she did not show it, or at least I did not see it. I flashed my eyes at her. She was motioness, expressionless, except for a certain hard stare —motionless except for the tugging of the wind at her cloak.

"Look at him," I went on.

"I have."

Her voice was even. It told nothing.

"No more emotion, feeling, in him than in—in a woman who's lost her illusion."

She half-smiled, but not pleasantly.

"Why should *she* have no emotion, no feeling, because she may have lost what was not worth having?"

"He hates women," I said. "All kinds."

Just why I said it I don't know, unless I meant to convey further cause for seeming not to like Williams. I perhaps intended to elaborate. But I was disconcerted by the unexpectedness, the savage little tone, of her quick-flung reply.

"And I hate men—all kinds. That's part of the wisdom of having lost illusions. I distinctly hate traitors."

She turned away. The wind swept her cloak from her side, flung back the crimson lining and revealed her hand, and in her hand a knife caught the faint transparency of

the binnacle's aura. She half-turned, but did not look again at me so that the wind brought her cape about her.

I wished I had not been the subtle fool. After all I might have known subtleties are worthless against women. They are impenetrable—the women, I mean. It is like using loaded dice, then betting on the numbers, not top or bottom, but on the side. Now I could not possibly convince her that I, too, hated traitors.

Not that it made any great amount of difference what she thought of me—so long as that knife was kept at a distance. I could not imagine what she had it for. For herself? She, being a woman among men of a kind that are not thought to be trusted? She did not appear squeamishly fearful; yet since the cape had never been off her when she was on deck perhaps the knife had never been out of her hand.

I had lost the chance of getting at her secret, the one Raikes inadvertently shared. But I had another. One perhaps she did not intend to have me learn any more than the one pertaining to Dakaru.

She did not leave the deck, but stood at the starboard rail, the invisible cloak losing her, or all but losing her, to my eyes. I saw her more clearly in my imagination than I would have done had she been close. I saw her symbolically, and symbolism is more vivid than the thing it stands for.

That is, to my mind there she stood, resolute, brooding, her pale, irregular face framed by black hair, calm, cold to appearance, but fierce at heart; enveloped by black cloth, lined with red; and in her hand a knife. Not a woman so much as something tenuously palpable and, to repeat, symbolic of all women of all time; disillusioned, and the more impenetrable for it.

It was a chill night and my bones ached with something other than cold.

The next hour passed, I know not how. It stretched itself along into time. I don't know when she had left the deck.

Raikes had come back, singing to himself or rather humming. He did not talk with me. He walked to and fro, but did not meet her. She was not there. I wondered what was the matter with him.

Once he made as if to come behind me, but I, alert, cried, "What is that?" and pointed. There was nothing. I knew it. But I nearly frightened myself. Raikes, catching the alarm in my voice, turned, hurried to investigate, peered, asked what I saw.

"I could have sworn there was somebody there," I said. "And something glinted." I had to add that.

He stood looking for some time, not concerned, merely idle. He had had no real purpose in getting behind me; and I had been cowardly for nothing. Presently there was more pulling and hauling; the men came aft, silent of voice, shuffling about—perhaps sleepily, but to me it seemed something more; lifelessly.

The watch changed. I gave over the helm. Williams was on deck. I knew that I couldn't sleep, so I stayed about, waiting for I knew not what.

Williams paced back and forth, lightly striding. At last he noticed me in the shadow of the companion. A hand gripped my shoulder and whirled me about. His face came peeringly close to mine.

"Oh, you!"

He had thought it might be some one else. It perhaps would not have been well with any one else to have been lurking there.

"No sleep to-night. I've got 'em again. Whither away? Ten, twenty, thirty, fifty years at most, to be alive and then perhaps be dead. How does it go? Perchance to dream. Tell me what you are afraid of, Skipper. I'll conjure it up. You'll know how I feel then. I'm shivered."

He had no sympathy with my recurrent weakness when the devil, or as in this case the devil's daughter—bowled me into the dumps.

"I tell you I believe in vampires," I insisted. "One has been at my veins all night. And the sphinx said she hated me."

He remarked truly, raspingly, that I talked nonsense.

"No. Riddles. As one should who has heard the sphinx. Listen. I have her secret. Dakaru is nothing, a trifle that may fall to any fellow's ears, as to Raikes's. But this: She loves you."

I don't know what Williams said. It wasn't a word; it was an exasperated, inarticulate, clipped comment. And he followed it up with a ferocious order to get below.

The three words had hit him in his Achilles' heel—the vulnerable spot. Love of women was to him as the flaming shirt some hero of old time put on unsuspectingly from the hands of a woman—who loved him.

And I had told the truth. It doesn't pay. I had told her the other thing. That did not pay either. Nothing remained but silence—and I had to talk.

I went below. I went to his cabin, and in dim light of the lantern swung from overhead inspected the chest. It was locked.

I looked about for something to pry with. I went out, slipped forward for a marlinspike. I would be drunk by morning, or——

By the main hatch I stumbled. My foot had struck something soft, heavy but with that plastic inertia that means a body, a human body.

I swore, chilled, surprised—aye, frightened.

My oaths had scarcely cleared my tongue before Williams shouted from above. He was like that. I mean his response to every situation was so instantaneous as to be automatic. "Good God!" I had cried, and readily, as if watching, he demanded who and what?

"A dead man!" I shouted up, convinced though really ignorant; but not ignorant if something beyond mere sense of sight and touch is admitted. There had been murder in the air. I had felt it all evening, as some of those strange wizards of wild islanders could *feel* the coming of storms.

It was a dead man: Tom Gibson. An inoffensive, slight-built fellow; the last mark one would have guessed for the slim knife that reached his heart and stayed there. He had no quarrel with anybody; at least none that was known. He was not the man to have a quarrel.

The men came with an air, less of excitement than of curiosity. Word passed quickly. Sleepers roused themselves out of the forecastle to look at the dead man and wonder.

A jargon of muttering, surmises, amazement, came from the circled group that closed around the two lanterns held over his body, while Williams with knees to deck bent searchingly over the corpse.

I broke into the chest before those on deck had lifted the body. I drove the cork into the bottle as the easiest way to get the liquor out.

No one will believe it, but I might as well tell the truth. I drank a quart of gin more rapidly than I could

have taken so much water; and in a few minutes it was a different ship, a different sea, a different world. A warm world—plenty of warmth in it.

Quickly I slipped the staple back into the chest, moistened my fingers and rubbed—to give age—the marks of the prying it out. And, as often happens in the best laid plans of mice and other thieves, I forgot the empty bottle as I hurried out.

There was a light under the door-crack of the room Miss Davenant used. Unthinkingly, carelessly, I knocked. I knocked again. Had I been then in reach of the Pearly Gate I would have as impudently battered at it and plucked St. Peter's whiskers had he frowned.

The door opened slightly; and she, recognizing me, pushed the door wide. She stood there expectantly, black cape and all. But there was no knife in her hand. I knew it, though I could not see her hand.

I bowed low and said:

"You made a triflin' mistake this evening. It was not I you tripped hellward. I just thought I'd let you know, so you wouldn't scream in the morning light—takin' me for a ghost. Good night."

I bowed again.

Looking up, I saw two gleaming eyes and nothing more. I heard, "Come in here," and nothing more. Had I been sober I wouldn't have gone. Had I been sober I would never have knocked.

CHAPTER V

TO A MERMAID THE WAGE OF SILENCE

THERE was scarcely room for the two of us to sit down. She did not sit for a time; how long a time I can't say. I put down the lid of a chest, filled with various feminine things, colored and soft-textured. folded neatly, and sat on it.

I leaned against the bulkhead and looked at her, perhaps with something of light, triumphant amusement on a stupid face—my own. I was not drunk, at least not in the full sense of that ambiguous word that means anything between high spirit and a sodden body; but I was well across the border into an exalted carelessness, indifference.

I was but returned to a certain normal state, one from which I would never have departed willingly. The world could go smash itself against the sun, and I would have ridden along jeeringly, my tongue loose at both ends.

Dutch courage? No, not courage at all; for whatever virtues I have had, drunk or sober, the quality of courage was not among them. But when that earthenware vessel of a body of mine was well moistened, I had the levitating sense of being a spectator, an onlooker, free to be impudent as a gallery god of Drury Lane, and as detached from the dangers in the plot when the passions of the stage found words and blows.

Being close to her, with my feet almost touching hers, and a yellow lantern playing the sun in a match-box of a room, she still seemed less of a woman, of an individuality, to me, than the figure in some tableau. Perhaps it was because the cape was still about her, for she shivered with frozen blood, chilled by something more than weather; and needed warmth. Her lips were tight-pressed, as if she were afraid to open them.

Retrospectively, I have shuddered at my half-hour in that cramped space with the murderess; and shaken at remembering she hated traitors. There was purpose in her; the purpose that settles down on itself like compact coils which a finger's pressure may release.

"What do you want?" she said at last.

Her lips quivered, her voice trembled—but as a rapier shivering from a blow, not tremulous in an unsteady hand. That was not what she had intended to say when she had ordered me in. It was an equivocation.

"I? Nothing. Show me your hands and I'll tell you again why I came. I'm no palmist to read fortune in the criss-cross of a hand's map. But if your fingers are empty I can show where you left your knife; and mine was not the red sheath for it—as you hoped."

"What do you mean?" she asked unconvincingly, perhaps not greatly caring to convince, but falling conventionally on to that sort of evasion.

"Why did you send Tom Gibson naked on such a night as this to God? Once I gave a withered wizard over at Rotuna a slab of tembac and a bottle of brandy and he laid magic stuff on my eyes, so I could see through such things as cloth and capes. Oh, yes. I can. On deck you had a knife. Now you have none. The hilt

that studded the body of Tom Gibson is the same—as you carried."

I had no way of knowing that it was, or rather of proving it. But I had no doubt.

"Who?"

It was an exclamation.

I told her again that poor Tom, all amazed and wondering, wrestling with memory to discover how and why it had happened, since he was no quarrelsome fellow, now stood in the anteroom of Heaven waiting to be kicked hellward. Later on, in years to come, she could meet him there and apologize; that I would probably come too, and sustain her, help convince him that it had been a mistake.

She had both hands to her face, covering her eyes. She was shaken, but not sobbing. Not at all. Her eyes were tearless when her hands fell away, dropped, and her arms hung for a moment loosely as if tied to her shoulders.

"It wasn't Raikes?"

She spoke low-voiced, driving at me at one and the same time a question and a confession.

"Raikes!"

"Wasn't it Raikes? Tell me! Oh, wasn't it?"

I thought I understood. Raikes, ill-fated, hearing her secret through no fault of his, was expected to have kept it as only a dead man can. She had made a mistake, after all, but I had not been fortunate as I thought, though Tom Gibson's luck was bad as I had thought it.

She said it was "terrible" and seemed to mean it, but was not broken down. She stared at me, or rather through me, in a kind of dazed wonderment; and seemed sincere without being horrified. She put her hands

together and the long, pale, strong fingers weaved in and out; but otherwise for seconds she was motionless, looking toward but scarcely at me.

"All my life I could never do anything otherwise than wrong." Her voice had the vacant, hollow sound of one thinking aloud, or addressing one's self. But as she talked she seemed to focus, more and more, her gaze on me, and at last was talking to me directly.

All her life, she repeated, her mistakes had been tragic; and, bitterly, she said that long ago she reached the point of not caring what she did. Look at her here with Davenant!

Of course, I understood then nothing of what that meant. She did not pause to explain. I listened. I had the curious sense of detachment, so alcoholically pleasant, of unreality; the sense that it was tensely interesting without affecting a personal contact—as when one is a spectator at a tragic play.

She had watched for Raikes, she had watched closely, by the galley. From the shadows, where she half-crouched and half-pressed herself into the outline of the bench, so as not to be noticed, she had kept her eyes fastened on whoever came within the light of the lantern hung up there. Hot tea was at hand for whoever wanted it—at all hours of night or day there was hot tea or coffee. She had seen Raikes come once—seen his face—but there were too many people about; she could not follow him.

At last she saw him, just after the watch changed, alone—recognized him by the tar blot on the back of his shirt though she had not seen his face. She followed. She spoke, whispering. He turned—she struck.

She could use a knife! Oh, how well and for what

cause! Most damnable, too, if I may be permitted a comment. That was why she had been so interested at what I had said the first night about Williams and his thirsty knife. Another of my lies, come home with a sharp beak.

It was strange, it was impressive, she said, how many little things touched her and Williams alike; and some big things too. She too was an "outlaw"—her word. There was such a thing as fate in the world. Her uncle—the father-relation vanished—by sheer accident, fate, had engaged Hurricane Williams.

She hated her uncle—with an almost casual frankness she said that. She hated all men, particularly her uncle; but not him so much as— She checked herself abruptly; a glint of alarm passed through her eyes that she should have come so close to admitting something, whatever it was, that was not to be confessed by even a murderess.

Davenant was a terrible man. Her family was a terrible family. The mother's side came from Sicily; the grandmother had been born a countess there. Terrible in vengeance, she meant; and with a little pride she emphasized it. She did not put on pride; it simply emanated.

But Davenant was more than terrible; the English blood, I judged, had evidently given him poise, patience, an icy, deceptive shell. She had much the same.

Davenant could not be trusted—ever. He regarded her only as a gambler regards his loaded dice.

Davenant had intended to kill Raikes. Raikes had heard why he and she were going to Dakaru. But the devil always keeps his pot stirring: Raikes was a sailor, and Williams treated Davenant no better than, no differently from, the men he drove. Besides, there was a reward for Williams's head: Davenant would go far

from his way for money. He was now some twelve thousand miles from his home—after money. So in the stirring of the devil's spoon, Raikes and Davenant got their heads close.

She—she had tried to warn Williams. He had ignored her. He bruskly turned away when she approached, or tried to approach, him alone.

That afternoon she had gone right into his cabin and told him—not listening to his impatient interruptions, not paying attention to his manner of turning away from her. She had told him, and he had not believed her. He had been silent, but his expression seemed to say that she was lying for some obscure purpose, such as a woman is never long without.

With any other man, at any other time, in her disturbed—and disturbing—life, she would have been furious. To be treated so! When intentions were noble, at that. And, too, her blood was Sicilian, or much of it.

But somehow fatalism had spread its black wings over her. She recognized Fate, or thought she did. More than fate—or as a part of fate—was a blind idealization of Williams. Love. She did not say that. She did not say idealization.

"I understand—everything," was her sentence, not nearly so revealing in words as in voice.

She had, in the course of her interest in Williams's name—both of them had had bitter relations with Grahame of Dakaru—searched all of the many articles written by returned travelers and antipodean scribblers for English papers. Most of these were imaginative; and journalists are inclined to be sympathetic toward the picturesque.

Much that Williams had done, and a great deal that

he had not done, had found its way into print; and more than once the purported story of his basic tragedy—the woman who sought to have him hanged, who did have him hanged—had been told. The frequent efforts to betray him on all sides were, more or less accurately, summed up from time to time in the press; and traitors that even try to serve the law are likely to find journalists unsympathetic. Miss Davenant had found color in plenty to heighten her own picture of him.

She knew more about him, or more of what was *said* about him, than I did. She was tensely interested in the fact that no person—and "person" was shaded by something subtle in her manner and voice to mean no woman—had ever been loyal to Williams. There was some kind of a story about how his own mother, at some time or other, had been fearfully prejudiced against him.

And I knew that deep within this tragic Sicilian was love of Williams—though she slid the word "love" scornfully from her lips when it came casually into her remarks.

Not knowing Williams, she had been alarmed by what Raikes and Davenant planned.

I mean not knowing him as I knew him.

Not that he was invulnerable. At least I don't suppose that he was. People could hurt him, did hurt him.

But kill him? The man that struck murderously at him was nearly doomed if he failed a hair's breadth; and all had failed. He was sudden in movements and hard in blows.

But it was difficult to understand, for me to understand, why he never seemed to hold a grudge against anybody lucky enough to strike at his life and get away alive. Some did—if they shot from a distance.

She was sitting down, her face framed in her two hands that pressed against the cheeks, pressed into a kind of symmetry the irregular outline of the sunken temples and exposed cheek-bones.

"What is to become of us all?" she asked, reaching over and putting a hand on my knee, and peering at me as if I had in some way prophetic sight.

Her hand returned to her cheek. There was nothing helpless, nothing even appealing, about her question or gesture. She asked it interestedly, as if I might know; but not as if any answer I could make would assist or would injure. What is written must be.

There are some with spirits bold enough to stare into the black eye-sockets of Fate—and not flinch. I did not think of her as being particularly bold, but as amazingly cruel, hardened.

"What is to become of us all?" she asked again.

I ask, how could I know? If we got before a storm we would probably have a reef for a tombstone, then the mermaids that salted the sea with their tears would weep over such of us as were handsome sailor men; but if the fool ship went on then....

Her hands were lowered on her face; the chin rested on the knuckles; and by the parted lips and puzzlement in her dark eyes I saw her wonder that I could say such things at such a time. Below the hair that lay close against her temples, I saw the green pendants, twinkling in the light, dim as it was. Some way they seemed to match her eyes, to be complement to them, though the eyes were black.

"You made me think you hated him," she said accusingly, as if by some means, indefinite but nevertheless

responsible, I was concerned in the mistake that tripped poor Gibson into death.

I did not see any connection between the two sentences. She seemed to feel that one led to the other.

"Why shouldn't I hate him?" I asked. "What has he ever done for me? Fished me out of water once. Flung me over his shoulder once when my knee was broken by a war-club. He backed shooting through the surf to a boat of fellows that were afraid to land and help. Strapped me flat to my back and let me howl through long nights for somebody with half a heart to shoot. I hate pain. Things like that: for what? To keep me alive? Think of sleeping forever and forever!"

"I can't sleep at all," she said simply.

That appeared to be the only thing she heard—my comment on sleep. But it wasn't so.

After a minute of thought she remarked, as if something had been made clear to her, that I owed my life to him. I told her I owed a lot of things that scarcely made life worth while to him, too. Having to work, for instance.

Her manner, not her voice, asked what *was* the matter with me. Women can't understand a drunken man, unless they know he is drunk; and as alcohol for a time goes to my tongue instead of my legs I was the more incomprehensible.

But I gradually realized that what she meant by the repeated question as to what would become of us, was what would be done about Tom Gibson's murder? It was only the disconcerting, haphazard speech from me that checked her intentions of getting me more or less implicated in secrecy, if not sympathy.

She got to the point deviously, remarking—with a

hopeless sigh, resigned, perhaps sincere—that if her uncle found it out, well— The rest was left to be imagined; the impetus she gave the imagination shot it straight to the conjecture of something unspeakably tragic.

Then she demanded: "What will *he* think?"

She cared more for that answer than for her uncle's finding out.

For some reason I was quiet and made no kind of answer; perhaps I was a little drowsy. I had the sensation of hearing her only from afar.

With sudden resolution she got up and threw the cape off her shoulders; and, all crimson, it fell to her feet. She had thrown it off to have her hands free; and to me there was something startling, mildly so, in the abrupt revealment, for I had not before seen her without that somber drapery.

Her body was rather slender, not thin, but more certainly not rounded. She wore a short skirt with a broad belt, vividly covered with yellow, perhaps gold braid. The full, silken, blouse-like waist was wine-colored. Whether excitement flushed her pale cheeks or whether they caught color from the red cloth, it would be difficult to say; but her face was no longer pale.

Her fingers snatched, rather than loosened, the earrings, and with a gesture and a word she asked me to get up from the chest. She opened it quickly, tumbled the clothes to one side, so that some fell unheeded to the deck; and, coming at a chamois bag, she pulled open its mouth and thrust the good handful of glittering things at me.

"That is everything I have. You won't tell? You needn't tell. No one will know, and some day I may show how I can't forget when any one does me kindness. Once I had— Oh, these few are nothing!"

Then remembering that she was driving a bargain, corrected herself. They were not nothing—only by comparison. The earrings were valuable. All the stones were genuine. She would never have paste—never! Her contempt was not theatric.

I took a step backward.

Was I refusing? It was everything she had. Besides, no one need know.

I shook my head. What the devil, I asked, could I do with the stuff? Natives didn't know gems from glass, or care for gold more than for brass, and my sole use would be in gifts or trade. Sell it? What for? Money?

I was getting tangled, or rather losing my sense of detachment. She was bringing me, so to speak, on to the stage. I don't like to talk when there is need for seriousness. I am awkward. I feel implicated, caught.

Besides, what was there to be bribed for? I knew better than to tell Williams a woman had done murder on his ship; and who else was there to tell?

Her seriousness was inescapable. She was aroused. To her this appeared a fair bargain, not so much because of what she was buying as because of what she was offering; that is, everything of value that she had. If the widow's mite, or the rich man's load that pyramids the camel's back so it can not pass the eye of a needle, be all that can be offered as a purchase price, one is expected to consider the sacrifice rather than the value.

Why did I refuse? Did I think there was something more? Bah—I was like all men! What did I want? Name it.

For a last time, would I or would I not accept? Look, this was gold and precious stones—and the glittering

trinkets were plucked up and dropped temptingly between her long fingers.

There was a hard glaze over her eyes. She was terribly in earnest; the dormant southern blood was foaming; an idea, a determination was in her brain.

I was not afraid. It was later, when I was sober, that I had chills over it; and of course when drunk I am rarely sincere. Never so when sober.

I have too sensitive an appreciation of the dramatic not to have known what I was doing. Besides she was a woman, and a woman draws bravado to the surface.

All the gallantry in the world, I suspect, has been, not through courage, but to impress woman. Men are gallant at times when no woman is around because they remember her.

So, suddenly exalted by the opening of a full-blown idea in my own head, I extended my hand, took the chamois sack and pulled tight the thong. For that second she had the intent look of one who has thrown a rock at a mark, and stands in concentration awaiting the result.

I turned my back on her, loosened and opened the window. Through the port went bag and gems, and a flap of spray came back in that sentient, accurate way that ocean water often has. Salty drops besprinkled my face. Perhaps a mermaid gratefully splashed her thanks.

I closed the port and turned to Miss Davenant, myself again. The devil, I told her, had bought me long ago; it was superfluous to force pay on to me for any work of his.

She was not used to the truth, at least not used to having it from men. She demanded why I did that. Her anger was apparent, but she suspended judgment for a second or two.

What did I mean by that? Why, I meant that I hadn't lost enough sense yet to weigh down myself with stuff that some fool might want, and crack me over the head to get.

What did she want? Silence? Couldn't she have it as well with her rings in the bottom of the ocean as in the bottom of my pocket? She could have it as well with them on her fingers; but a woman never feels she has got what she really, deeply wants unless she suffers.

Good-by—and I went out.

I was a little unsteady, but, too, the ship was rolling. I went on deck, ascending the stairs with great deliberation.

On deck I saw two forms about a lantern. I approached. They were talking.

Davenant held a knife in his hand. He was examining it, and Williams held the lantern almost against the knife.

"As I said," Davenant remarked, slowly turning the knife back and forth, "this looks—this *is* hers. Not that she wouldn't use it—her grandmother came from Sicily.

"This is very queer—very queer. Dula never spoke to the man in her life. I am sure of that. You don't think—" Davenant broke off.

"One of my seamen has been murdered," said Williams coldly. "I'd swing whoever did it from a yard-arm."

He said it not as a threat but as a statement, as he might have said: "I'd pitch any man over the side that refused to obey orders."

He might do that; but the chances were he would jump over and fish the disobedient one out. But the *Sally Martin* didn't have a yard-arm. A mere technicality perhaps. I might call his attention to it later.

"Your justice is severe," said Davenant. The sneer was subtle.

I came from the shadows, talking:

"Inquest? What have we here? Well, well, a knife. Gibson was about your build, Skipper—in the dark, you know. A good strong hand sent home that blow.

"Well, well, what a sharp knife! Miss Davenant early in the evening told me she'd lost a knife. Right out of her room. Stolen. Wonder if 'twas this one?

"Who *could* have done it? What'd you think, Mr. Davenant? Somebody mistook poor old Tom Gibson for the Skipper?

"Miss Davenant said the knife was an heirloom. Looks like one, doesn't it? Is it hers? Oh, it is? Now who could've been snoopin' around in her cabin?

"A knife, she said. Didn't know she meant a youthful cutlas.

"By the way, Mr. Davenant, Raikes has been boasting a good deal about— But you understand, no doubt. He's dropped hints that— And he's the sort of fellow that looks at home dangling from the end of a yard-arm."

Davenant, with an ill-concealed trace of anxiety, asked what Raikes had said.

"Said? What could he say? Nothing, more than I to whom you have also been—ah—polite.

"But the manner of the man, his hems and haws, and the wise winking of his lone eye— Why, sir, to see Raikes strut it, you'd think that you, the owner, conspired to make him captain though the scuppers ran blood. He's a ——— rascal, liar and cutthroat, like myself, so I know——"

"Stow that nonsense," said Williams, his voice steely and final.

He always gave orders, big ones and little ones, in just such a voice as Joshua must have used when he commanded the sun and moon to stand still. So I went off and to bed, but being too sober to sleep I dreamed.

Many things happened in the following days, and none of them important.

The first thing that happened to poor Tom when he came blundering into this world, much as he had blundered out of it, was to be swathed in flannel by a midwife; and the last thing was to be swathed in canvas, sewed snugly in by Hawkins and myself, with a link or so of iron chain at his feet to make sure that he went toward the place where he belonged.

Over he went, feet first. The only prayer that went up was a suppressed, strained, "God forgive me!" from Miss Davenant, who, again in her black cape, with a black scarf thrown over her head and tied around her face and neck so that little was seen but her eyes, stood on the poop looking down.

I was near her. No one else was near enough to hear; or if he had heard was near enough her secret to understand.

Over he went with a heavy relieved sound at the water's surface, like a great sigh. For two seconds, scarcely longer, there was a hushed, solemn pause as our eyes strained at the white streak passing from sight in the green crystal waves, edged with foam.

Williams shouted, quickly, throwing words as if he flung them with his hand, and stood watching, somberly, critically, as the men moved to their work. The burial service, such as it was, was over. The *Sally Martin* was cracking on her way.

And we poor futile fools went on with the sweat and

sins of life, though do what we might and fight as we would, in our own time we would follow poor Tom. Whither away and why? Perhaps he already had learned, and smiled in drowsy faint scorn to think how men hung on to life.

Most of that day Miss Davenant stood very quietly by the rail and looked down into the sea. But most of other days she had done much the same; yet the difference was enough for Hawkins to remark it.

"She feels bad 'cause it was her knife," he offered me by way of enlightenment.

She found a moment to say that she did not understand, but she thanked me. A kind of strong inquiry was in her eyes, a doubt as to whether I had had motives of my own for saying what I had to Davenant and Williams; and if so what were they? She seemed a little uneasy rather than grateful, as if used to having to pay in pounds of flesh for every service done her.

Somehow I was less touched with sympathy than by something else, something not fear or distrust but having to do with her inordinate composure, which I knew very well was much like the composure of a serpent lying in motionless coils. Woman learns patience the last of all things; and it is terrible, this conjunction of coiled patience with woman's unreasoning, unheeding, immolating passion. She seemed not to invite sympathy; less because she was unentitled to it, than consciously to repel it as something worthless, unusually insincere.

"I was angry last night when you threw my things away. I don't understand yet. But I thank you."

Her lips scarcely moved.

"He"—meaning Davenant—"said it was a good thing I mentioned having missed the knife to you."

Then, as if reluctantly convinced, but with the shadow of doubt or two lingering: "You are clever."

I admitted that I was. She looked at me again, her doubts increasing.

"I don't understand you," she said, not inviting confidence, but being frank. And she added reflectively, as if it was after all the really important thing, "I do understand him"—meaning Williams.

CHAPTER VI

BOILINGS AND BUBBLINGS AT DAKARU

TWO weeks later life was still unchanged on the *Sally Martin,* though I had acquired wisdom with every passing hour, and the chest in Williams's cabin had a new lock.

But that was putting new bolts on the stable when the mare was gone. I had a dozen bottles stowed when the new lock appeared.

Williams said nothing. He had other things to think of, and not the least was a false log into which I peeped from time to time. Precious little good wasting all that time imagining weather and knots from Singapore when he had no clearance papers. But it was his neck the gibbet beckoned for. Not mine. I'd swear I was a pressed man.

I was nearer a mutineer than anything else. Hawkins, too. We were leagued with Davenant. Only Hawkins did not know it. Raikes had gone over to Williams, and carried warnings about us.

Davenant was going to divide the wealth of Grahame of Dakaru among us. He would more willingly have divided his sheet to make us a funeral shroud, only it would have taken more than one sheet to encircle Hawkins.

Understand me; Davenant was not so much of a fool as he may appear. I had, with the few well-chosen words

already set down, broken off his relations with Raikes, much to the regret of both.

Davenant could not trust him longer, and Raikes might call me—as he did—a liar, a black liar, a thrice doubly damned liar; but that Raikes had not kept his secret was evident in my repetition of it.

It happened that Davenant was, in addition to having some hate of Williams, afraid of him. When a pirate and a gentleman sit down to a roast fowl, there is no doubt as to who will do the carving. Davenant felt himself the gentleman.

Hurricane Williams was about the last man he would have picked for the voyage, because at Dakaru he thought there was a fine estate and much wealth; and some people feel that it is better to fail than to share. The discovery that it was Williams, and not some obscure sailing-master by the name of Moore, caused Davenant to be melancholy and wish for a way to get clear from what by common report was an exceedingly dangerous man.

Common report is as much to be trusted as an heir's tears, though in his case there was some convincing evidence. The man who once blew over a cliff and landlocked the gunboat of a very proud European power is likely to have a reputation. Williams had done that, and some other things that made the Germans want his head. In those days the Germans wanted almost everything in the South Seas; since then the want has grown, also diminished.

Anyway, Williams was known as a pirate; and Davenant must have felt pretty much like one who fishes for rock-cod and finds himself in possession of a shark.

The belief that Raikes was something of a navigator

had encouraged a mutual understanding. The fact that Raikes knew what Davenant was up to at Dakaru assisted in the understanding. What would ultimately have happened to Raikes had best be left to the imagination, for he was only an ignorant, greedy fellow.

About the time that a new lock appeared on the chest in Williams's cabin a thing took place that rather gave coloring to certain hints I had been dropping, when chance offered, into Davenant's ear, *i. e.* that I hated Williams. What I really hated was not to find out why Davenant and his sinister niece were laying so mysteriously their course for Grahame's "empire." Miss Davenant had retired into incommunicable reserve. She spoke and passed, or passed without speaking.

We ran into a bit of good weather; and the sun being warm, the wind steady, and Hawkins having the wheel and the deck to himself, I approached, gave him what was left in a bottle, and we fell into an argument about something or other. There was a woman in it, I know. There is a woman in all the troubles that come to men.

Davenant came up and took a seat by the rail, but we did not notice him. We did not notice much of anything, and the *Sally Martin,* being always up to something, veered from her course and was in a fair way to go stern on when Williams appeared.

Without warning, without a word, his iron fist crashed on Hawkins's head, and the ox-like man went to the deck with a grunt. Williams swung his weight to the wheel and brought her around, then gave me the helm and such a look as made shivers ripple from neck to heel.

Hawkins got up dizzily, ragefully, saying something about no man could treat him like that. Williams—

braced, feet apart, knees slightly bent and neck drawn in —waited.

Every man forward had suddenly found some reason to be on the rigging or forecastle. They probably wished afterward that they had had wit enough to rush the poop and choose a new captain; but men have to be prodded and welded into organized action, even into mutiny.

And Williams had to accept a fight whenever it was offered. Nothing but praise and reward would await any crew that overpowered and brought him into port. The fierce laws that uphold the captain on the high seas denied to him their support. He was an outlaw; and men took his commands because they were afraid of him, not because they were afraid of some obscure, vague judge in a distant city with powers of death and imprisonment between his teeth.

Hawkins, powerful, huge of body, murderously aroused, came at him—and was met more than half-way. I feared a knife-flash, for Williams was deadly in a corner; and nothing could have seemed more of a handicap than to be in front of that enormous fellow, who, even though setting down much of his weight to fat, was still powerful.

Williams did not dodge or duck. He refused such artifice of fighting. He seemed to have the uncanny gift of being able to precipitate himself headlong, as if thrown; such was his rush then. An iron-taloned left hand closed like a dog's teeth on Hawkins's neck, and the overhand drive of the right arm smote again and again before Hawkins, awkwardly but powerfully, clawed Williams to him with crushing embrace and lifted him clear of the deck.

So rapidly as almost to elude perception, Williams

brought a knee into the bulging belly, and, releasing his left hand, struck a short blow with the point of his crooked elbow at the base of Hawkins's jaw. Both men went to the deck together, but Hawkins did not get up.

Williams waited, his tense face more fierce than ever, and his hand slipped inquiringly to the sheath at his side. He was breathing hard, but with deliberate evenness. Men dropped from the rigging and hurried silently out of sight.

Hawkins, hand to jaw, reelingly sat up. His eyes were dazed and scarcely open. He muttered gutturally, plainly: "Damn you, I liked you!"

Then Williams did an accountable thing, for him, so unbending and molded in a sort of steel-like rigidity. He said: "I still like you. But you two fools are on a ship. Not in a barroom."

That night Hawkins and I talked it over. I assured him with some sincerity that he had come off with the greater luck.

For one thing, Williams had spoken with me alone for about two minutes. What he said was neither abusive nor pleading, but that I, who had been near him so long, would drunkenly meddle with a man on watch was surprising; he did not expect discipline, but he would have obedience—and punishment.

It hurt, for this was the man who would throw his life into hazard time and again for anybody that had even so faint a claim on his friendship as I; and in more ways than a half dozen I was his debtor. I knew he was fierce-tempered and merciless in every way except at heart.

Those two minutes hurt more than what followed; I went aloft with a tar-bucket. Every dirty job from dumping slops to swabbing the galley was given to me.

Though he could scarcely swallow and had a swollen nose and battered cheek, I told Hawkins he came off the easier; but at that moment we were both nursing a sense of outrage. Williams had gone too far. There was no doubt about it.

"Wouldn't wiggle my little finger to save 'im," said Hawkins thickly. His articulation was impaired for a time.

"This is my last trip," I said. "He's planning to make some port some place in the islands. Making a false log. We'll get away there somehow."

"Don't mind the last beatin'. I ask' for that. But catchin' me when I wasn't lookin'. No. I'm mad."

Pause, while we meditated. Then—

"Where does he get it, anyhow?'

"That's why they call him a hurricane. Ought to see him when two or three jump him at once. But he hit you when you wasn't looking. He just goes crazy when he catches anybody soldiering. Times, I'm afraid of him. But he didn't use the knife. I was afraid."

Then Hawkins talked. He had been to Dakaru with Carp Taylor, slaver, the same that Williams had once caused to disembark a load of black boys. Grahame and Carp Taylor were not friends, perhaps, but they had business dealings.

Nobody was a good friend to the brutal, sour, villainous old Grahame. A thousand miles from nowhere, Grahame did as he pleased. Planters not so far away from consuls and governors did pretty much the same. Grahame treated his dogs better than the natives. Most men did treat dogs better than natives.

The best thing that could be said of Grahame was that probably he was no cannibal. He was everything

else. No doubt he would have been that, too, if he could have got hold of Williams. He said—or was said to have said—that he would cut Williams's heart out and eat it raw.

Hawkins saw what went on at Dakaru. He heard what Carp Taylor and Grahame said of Williams, and had decided that Williams must be pretty much of a man to fill fellows like that with anger and fear.

Grahame had built himself a paradise on top of hell. He guarded it with Portuguese and hounds. The scoundrel must have had some kind of a sense of beauty, for he had a big house and gardens, all manner of flowers and shrubs, many imported, and it was said—though who had been inside to report truly I do not know—that the house was filled with treasures and also held a wondrously beautiful girl. The native servants may have regarded iron pots and copper pans as "treasures." Anyway, rumor gave him wealth, enormous wealth; but no money. He paid for everything in pearls, and defended his fishing-grounds as if they belonged to him. He had groves of coconut-palms, but never sold a pound; long avenues of bananas, and fed the fruit to hogs; sago-palm groves and cacao, pineapple-fields—and most of it was wasted. He would sell nothing. He did not want strangers around

If a gunboat came casually, or to inquire into certain stories that missionaries heard from a distance and repeated insistently, Grahame—it was said—would receive and entertain the officers, show them the plantation, so beautifully cared for, give the crew all they could eat and carry, call up the "negroes" and let them tell their own stories—through the Portuguese overseers. The officers would sail away, satisfied in every particular

except in failing to have seen the legendary white girl of Dakaru; and on the same evening the natives that had complained would be shot.

Didn't they get enough to eat? Didn't they have tobacco and meat and fruit and fish, all they could cram into their capacious bellies? What if they were whipped and knocked about for being lazy? They were being civilized. The savages. Supposing they never were allowed to return to their islands; what more did they want than they had?

"I heard 'im say it," Hawkins muttered. "Him an' Carp Taylor was standin' down by the native quarters waitin' for two blacks that had been caught out at sea in a canoe. Runaway. No place to go, but they went anyhow. A big bloodhound was rubbin' a flabby ear 'gainst his leg, an' he reached down an' rubbed its head an' went on cussin' the boys for tryin' to get away.

"They was brought up. Hands tied behind 'em—two old fellows. A little black Portugee, spittin' like a mad cat, whipped 'em up—an' Grahame shot 'em.

"I saw 'im. Just like that—*bing-bing,* he shot 'em. 'Fore they could get to their knees to 'im.

"Then he cussed 'em. Said no more black boys'd try that. Carp Taylor, he laughed."

And I told what had taken Williams to Dakaru. A half-drunken blackbirder told a good story on the wharf at Auckland one night. Williams was there, saying nothing, wearing a beard and waiting for a shipment of dynamite from Sydney—and holding up a trader that had agreed to take him and the "trade goods" around to a little island in Carpentaria where Williams had a boat hid.

The drunken slaver told his story: How Grahame

had run across him and wanted natives; and, having a crew of Samoans, he sold his *crew*. It happened that Williams was the close friend of a Samoan chief, that he knew the islands as well as he knew his own deck, that he used Samoan sailors altogether if he could get them; and in more ways than it would take a week to tell he was a man the Samoans liked and trusted.

Something happened to the blackbirder that night. It may be he fell and broke his neck, or it may be somebody pushed him, or possibly somebody just caught the top of his head and twisted it around till his neck cracked. Anyway, something happened.

About three months later something also happened at Dakaru. A drab little schooner, carrying about three times too much sail for her size, puffed in. Clash, slap, splash, boat after boat began to leave her—boats full of natives with rifles.

Grahame's own schooner was in the bay, a long trim little craft, swinging at her moorings as if rocking herself to sleep. She was wakened in a hurry, though. Two boat-loads of natives made for her, and were all over in a minute just as if they belonged there. I suppose they did—they had come to stay on her anyhow.

About the same time the long-boat and twenty natives and two white men hit the beach—and they didn't stop. A Portuguese or two and some dogs got in the way, and died. There was yelling and howling and the cracking snap of rifles going off every which way. It sounded like hell with Grahame's soul just arrived. But he didn't show up, then.

"Up the road of coral sand we went," I told Hawkins. "Bright-flowered shrubs went down under our feet. We saw the eight-foot coral wall that circled the house, like

miniature battlements about a city—Grahame had been working his black boys to death for years at one thing and another.

"We would have gone over that like a cat goes over a fence, but there was no need. The grilled iron gates were swung back, and beyond through the foliage we could see the big squat house.

"But we didn't go through the gate. Right there in the center of the driveway stood a girl. I had heard about her, too. The girl that didn't exist. The sort of legendary saint of Dakaru—that no white man had looked on. Portuguese aren't white. Not the kind Grahame had.

"Some kind of a thin blue silk robe was about her, one hand catching it up and holding it against her breast, the other hand half-raised in a little gesture of alarm.

"I've thought about her. One has lots of time to think at sea. Too much. And I tried to remember how she really did look. Her hair was yellow and her eyes were dark. That's about all I can say for sure—excepting there was a look on her face like a child that hasn't known fear, being suddenly awakened.

"She was only a child. I don't know anything about the ages of women, but she *was* a child. Not more 'an sixteen or seventeen. Maybe less.

"I caught the hazy impression of two native women peering frightenedly from behind a brilliant screen of hibiscus.

"Williams stopped abruptly and we pressed against him, circling and almost surrounding her. Most of the natives had heard something about angels. Missionaries always give angels blonde hair. I don't know why. This was the first one they had seen.

"She was surprised. She was startled. But she wasn't frightened. One'd never have thought there were devil Portugees and bloodhounds and a lot of bruised backs—even if the bellies were full—around there.

" 'Where's Grahame?' said Williams.

"You know how he would have said it. Just as if he had grabbed her by the neck.

" 'Father's gone for a ride—over there.'

"Her white arm slipped from the loose sleeve and pointed, but her eyes didn't follow her gesture.

" 'Why, what *is* the matter?' she asked tremulously.

"Williams hesitated. You know, as a matter of principle with him—if not memory—he never believes a woman.

"For a minute I thought he was going to strike her aside and go on. She stared at him with alarm showing more and more on her delicate face. She realized that he was a terrible man. Maybe she had read of pirates. It's said Grahame's house is full of books.

"Williams whirled around. He's abrupt as lightning. He snarled two or three words, and off we went again, cutting across the grounds for the native quarters.

"We saw two or three figures scooting at a distance and yelled. It scared 'em the more.

"We started searchin' the houses and found two or three women trying to hide under mats. They said the men were working on a road about a mile off. Yes, there were Samoans with them.

"Off we started again, panting and straggling out. Two or three Portugees came nearly meeting us. They had come down the road to see what was going on. They turned and ran, shooting wildly and yelling worse.

"We came on to some black boys that had been at

work, now scared half to death; but in about two seconds others began to pop from behind trees and out of the bush. There was an excited jabber of slaves and rescuers.

"Grahame had at least seventy-five black men, and about ten of them were Samoans. He had killed two.

"When word was passed they were to be carried off, those fellows—all of 'em—went crazy. Some from the Solomons. Many from Santa Cruz. Bad fellows. They wanted to burn everything and— You know. It wasn't Grahame only. It was the Portugees too. And the white girl.

"Bad natives are the most vicious beasts under the sun. Williams knows it—only he says whites ought to let 'em alone.

"There was a fine boiling and bubbling of trouble, I can tell you. The Samoans were all right; they are always all right. But the others were excited. They'd been beaten and kicked around, chewed by dogs and—well, they were dead set on just tearing the top of that old island off and making a grand stew of Portugees and Grahame.

"There was a hubbub in more tribal languages than wrecked Babel. They grabbed axes and picks and shovels, trying a war-dance and whoopin' it up as if the pot was already boiling.

"Right then an' there, I sympathized with Grahame, his Portugees and hounds. He must have known he was sitting on top of a volcano, and we'd come along an' let the black men blow up.

"We weren't in danger or anything like that. If a fight started there'd be more dead cannibals than were already buried at Dakaru.

"It was that girl at the gate that saved Grahame. I can't look very far into Williams's brain, but I have an idea if he hadn't run into that vision he would have gone off with his Samoans and left Grahame and his Portugees to fight it out. The first thing the wild blacks would have done was raid the house.

"As it was, there was no wastin' time trying to herd up that crowd. They were scattered in groups and raced about, yelling.

"Back on the run we started, and I wasn't as near the rear on the return trip as I'd been coming. I didn't want to get to straggling among that crazy mob of cannibals.

"It's not easy to tell about. Some of the Portugees were shooting from away off. The naked natives were galloping around brandishin' picks and shovels—and a Solomon Islander and Santa Cruzian too usually has a bone through his nose and a face like a hell-fiend. Chipped teeth, and bushy hair, and clattering shell beads around his neck. Missionaries say they have souls, these devils.

"Up to the wall about the house and garden we went. A big cannibal streaked through the gate, waving an ax. He was going to be first. Williams shot him, then whirled the rifle around and clubbed down another that was boltin' past.

"In a minute he had a guard at the gate, and we were running through the grounds inside to find what other entrances there might be, and guard 'em too. We saw no one inside. The girl must've been frightened by that time.

"We did not go to the house, but a kind of cordon was thrown around it to finish any energetic cannibal

that got over the wall; and Williams and I went back to the iron gates.

"The cannibals had us outnumbered two to one, but what are numbers? More targets in a case like that. We could see that the fellows on board the schooner had taken her from the mooring and were tacking—it was an open bay with a bare arm of reef stretching out as a breakwater—to bring her 'longside of our boat. The cannibals were celebrating at a distance, settin' fire to their quarters and yellin' defiance at us.

"There was a pretty situation for you. The sort that Williams is always into. He defending Grahame's daughter and property from blacks he himself had released and wanted to carry off.

"He tried to make them understand that they would be taken to their own islands if they would gather down at the beach; but he might as well have talked to a whirlwind. Pretty near everything he gets into doubles around with some kind of ironical twist, like that.

"Moreover the Samoans, who can be stubborn, were saying they wouldn't have them savages on the same ship; and were stealing pot-shots at the war-party.

"It was a mix-up to make Satan himself wriggle about in joy; and even I grinned when Williams wasn't looking. Ruffians—black or white—might be human beings, as he said of the black ones; but I couldn't ever sympathize with his sympathy for 'em.

"I boil when I think of what they go through on plantations, but I cool off when I think what I'd go through if they ever got hold of me in a nice spot for an oven. Wrap me in plantain-leaves and bury me in a coffin of hot rocks.

"There was a flying clatter of hoofs—an' a big man,

bareheaded, with long black mustaches like walrus-tusks, came into sight, and he came on. He had a pistol in his hand.

"I had a long look at him afterward, but I remember him from that first glimpse. His hair was rather long and white, but the mustache was black, and his face was big and full, a bit fat. No doubt it was usually red, with that overfed complexion of the beef-eater some Englishmen never lose, no matter where they go.

"But then it was not red. There wasn't a drop of blood in it. His mouth was half-open and the teeth stood out. Surprisin' what one notices in a flash. His lips were drawn back as though he were going to tear somebody with his teeth.

"The cannibals made as if to run at him. They did run a few steps, but stopped to throw whatever they had. Perhaps the fear of him was too deep.

"Anyway he paid no attention to them. He rode for the gate. He came at a gallop.

"The Samoans with us made as if to stand, then parted right and left. I pitched myself to one side. Grahame was coming through—and he was comin' fast.

"It's a wonder nobody shot. Because he was white, perhaps. Besides, anybody knew why he came on like that. We had seen the girl.

"Williams was left alone in the gateway. As though a panic's breath had blown the rest of us aside we cleared the road. He lifted a hand and cried: 'Stop!' By ——, he meant it, too.

"Grahame didn't even try to stop. He had a crop and reins in the same hand and struck the horse's shoulder —a big bay with a white streak on the chest—and the pistol fired almost pointblank. It missed though, for

Williams had jumped—in that sudden way of his, like a stone from a sling—at the horse's head.

"All I saw was a blur of figures; a powerful horse with head dragged down, stumbling for a tenth of a second, with Williams clear of the ground, holdin' on by dead weight, likely to be shaken off and crushed under hoof, or smashed when the horse fell going like that. Leaning over, striking with the crop an' cursing, was Grahame.

"That picture didn't last much longer than one could snap finger an' thumb; then the horse was down, kicking out terribly. Grahame lay some yards ahead, moving drunkenly in an effort to get to his feet. His head was cut and blood streaked down his gray hair and smeared the whole side of his face.

"Williams scrambled out with sudden, fierce movements like a fish jerks itself off a hook. His shirt was torn away. The shoulder and back were a bluish red—as if he had been flayed, or had started to be flayed, and broken away. Gravel and sand were ground into his flesh. The side of his face was scraped too; and blood appeared.

"He staggered a little, an' then took a step forward, limping, almost sinking. The effort it took to straighten himself was as plain as—well, as the chance he took in goin' off his feet at that horse's head. The horse was up and galloping crazily through the garden, the stirrup flappin' an' frightenin' him the more.

"Grahame didn't have his bearings for a moment or two. He only had the urge to reach the house. He still held the pistol. He reeled forward, crisscross like a drunken man, leanin' way over, about to fall every instant.

"'Stop,' said Williams again.

"He had a broken ankle, but he stayed on his feet. He even walked a step or two. I don't suppose he felt pain just then, but a barefoot man with a broken ankle hasn't anything but grit to stand on.

"And as for pain, it made no difference when he did feel it later. Nothing exists for him but the thing he wants.

"'Stop,' Williams had said, and that seemed to remind Grahame.

"He staggered around. There was a kind of mystified expression on his face that went off at once.

"He raised the pistol. He forgot it was empty. We had all forgot.

"Williams's knife went from his hand—like an arrow. It buried itself high on the left side of Grahame's shoulder. It was meant for his heart. He was already unsteady on his feet. The blow put him to the ground.

"Then the girl came out of the house. She came tearing herself from the frightened black women that tried to hold her back; and her thin blue silk robe was torn and pieces of it were left in the hands of the women.

"She pulled the flimsy, ragged silk about her as she ran down the path. She was gettin' it out of the way of her running. Not thinking about the ivory shoulder that showed, and the silken white chemise. Her yellow hair streamed behind her, an' she flung herself by her father as if lifelessly pitched there. And she moaned, too choked for even sobs to get out."

——— And that was the beginning of what happened to us at Dakaru. The rest of it was like this:

Williams walked up to them, the father and daughter, where Grahame, half-risen, was tugging to pull the knife

from his shoulder and cursing Williams, me, us—all, everything, everybody, even God Himself—with a steady, implacable flow of terrible words. Williams went up. He limped a little. Not much. He said nothing, then.

It was very quiet, or seemed so, though down by the quarters the dogs were howling in the distance—barking and rushing in and out at the cannibals, who howled too, worse than the dogs. The Portuguese were shooting. Ragged reports of rifles, and yelling now and then. But that was at a distance. It seemed very far away.

Right there it was silent, still, except for half-choked oaths of Grahame, flowing out. All oaths.

He was not in a senseless passion. No. He was like a man who stands with his heels on the brink of hell, his face toward the Judge, and does not care. Determined to say what he thinks.

Williams stooped and picked up the pistol. It was then he saw it was empty, or remembered. I edged a little nearer. I could not see his face. I could not see the face of the girl, huddled motionless, her arms about Grahame.

Only Grahame's face I could see, and that was on Williams. It was distorted almost to tears; the long black mustache hung down even with the point of his chin, or below, and the chin and lips worked at his oaths like some horrible, humanized mask.

I suppose he thought Williams would kill him. The end of a fight is death in those far places and between such men as go there to break laws.

I don't know what Williams thought; I never knew; nor how he felt. I know he was hurt, hurt more somewhere inside of himself than by the flayed skin and broken ankle. The men who hate men, and women too, who are

grimly implacable—they are really tender-hearted. They hate because they have suffered; and they wouldn't have suffered if they were not more sensitive, more trusting, than those who are not deeply wounded and made bitter when people don't keep faith with them.

Take it the other way around. The terrible women are those who've been hurt, and could not, would not, forgive. So with men.

I am not defending him. I shall have enough to do in interpreting certain records of the Great Angel so as to keep myself from injustice in the Last Judgment Hall, without being an advocate for better men than I.

Let it be remembered why Williams made that raid; friends of his friends had been put into bondage. The Samoans were his people. They gave him welcome and harborage and sanctuary, greeting him with that limitless generosity that is peculiar to uncivilized, to barbaric and savage people. And some of them were already so civilized as to be willing to spread his whereabouts for the stuff with which gin is bought. These were the last days of real kingly power on the islands, and such civilized natives would have paid dearly for their betrayal, and paid by the savage code.

Williams broke laws, and he broke heads, and he was often a brute, ferocious; but he never tormented. No one else tormented anybody or anything if he saw. He struck and he killed as the need seemed to require.

He was always brief in his speech. He did not question Grahame. He did not tell Grahame that he had come back to the garden to keep the cannibals out, and that the two carcasses there at the edge of the road where they had been thrown were muted witnesses on his behalf.

He never defended himself anyway, anywhere. Perhaps he thought it a waste of words.

He said he had come for the Samoan sailors; that he would take all the natives that would go with him—take them home.

With that Grahame knew him as Hurricane Williams. Stories of incomprehensible audacity were told of him; how he made slavers disgorge and in other ways offensive to civilized men won the worship of savages.

"Cannibal himself," said rumor.

Cannibalism—the crime so terrible that there are no laws among white people to punish it. It is the crime unthinkable.

Grahame stopped cursing. He looked at Williams as if he had recognized some—some monstrosity. It was as if his curses were inadequate; not that he was intimidated. A certain inexpressible loathing seemed to cover his face, as one might look at an armed leper.

Of course this was all in rapid seconds but they stamped themselves on me like powerful dies.

One had to know Williams even better than I to see how deeply he regretted—I don't know precisely what. Perhaps the flower of a girl in the torn blue silk, splotched with her father's blood. Here was contagious, shaking grief, inconsolable as if she wept over a coffin. The Orphean lyre that moved stones and tamed wild beasts must have struck the notes of sobbing virgins.

Perhaps Williams regretted the knife sent into the body of a man who, however he might bruise and butcher blacks, asked no quarter and offered no parley when his daughter seemed in danger. I know it was an effort to resist offering to carry Grahame into the house.

Williams was skilful with wounds, too. But he

turned away—as if his heart were harder than the stones that moved vibrantly before the half-god's sobbing lyre.

That is about all.

With two fairly heavy sticks, one on the outside and one on the inside of the ankle, bound tightly as I could make them under his direction, he ignored his injury. He was insensible to pain and to fatigue, shaking them off as an angry man shakes off drowsiness.

The Samoans were flung out in a long thin line and moved down to encircle the other natives. He managed at a distance to make the four or five overseers understand, and they helped eagerly, perhaps hoping to see a massacre in the end.

Nobody was to shoot unless the line was rushed. He was emphatic. Alone he went down to talk with the trapped natives, using the meager "trade" English as a basis for the harangue.

He was always surprisingly patient with natives. It is part of their life to bicker and debate, hesitate, refuse and evade when they have already decided to agree.

He persuaded them to give themselves up. The leader among them was one who claimed to be the son of a Guadalcanar chief. The assurance that he and the few of his tribe were to be taken home was too good to be really believed, but too tempting to be rejected. Others among them had heard of Williams in that vague, half-legendary, inchoative way that rumor spreads farther than white men's footprints.

The Samoans objected. They wouldn't have the wild blacks on the same ship with them. Never. Let them be killed.

More parleying, and much formal dignity. Strange

from a man who would not use words in explanation or argument with anybody of his own blood.

We sailed out with two ships. Williams was down for another act of piracy. But most amazingly he said, after certain provisions and supplies—with some boxes painted warningly with red lead—had been transferred:

"This is Grahame's ship. He'll get it back."

And that was all.

He laid the course for the small schooner and left me with her to head for Savaii. About all I know of navigation is to follow the wind and hope nothing'll get in the way.

He turned and made for Santa Cruz, bumped around from village to village until every man that belonged in the group was in reach of home; then he went on to the Solomons. He put those islanders right down on the beach of their village.

There was a big feast—probably with some stray bushman in the oven, and tinned meats served generously; and the chief offered Williams the earth. It happened that among those who came back was his own son.

There is no prouder blood than a savage chieftain's, and somewhere, probably around the great heart-fire of mankind's first and common fathers, the traditions of hauteur and munificent gratitude were learned by the kingly families, black and brown as well as white and yellow.

Some days later Williams started on his way. A German gunboat—the Germans were getting meddlesome in those waters even then—from a diminishing distance asked for some intimate information, and began to shoot. Probably her officers identified the schooner, for naval

officers of all countries liked to visit Grahame. Escape on the sea was impossible.

Williams did not dilly-dally. He made straight for the rocks. The Germans found a burning schooner—and dynamite. Williams and his Samoans vanished among unsuspected friends, and the German landing-party was beaten back and out.

Revengeful, the boat shelled and burned the village, and destroyed priceless high-stemmed war-canoes that had been fittingly christened at the launching by the blood of women. But the natives considered the bargain fair. There were sleek, thick German heads to smoke amid the rafters of the restored *gamal* house.

As I finished that book of Williams's odyssey I slipped to the side and furtively threw over the bottle Hawkins and I had emptied in the course of my narrative. When I came back to his side, Hawkins had nothing to say for a long, long time.

"What do you think'll happen when we get to Dakaru?" he asked.

"Blood will be splashed to the moon."

"Curious—Grahame has that big plantation. Keeps it right up, an' won't sell a thing."

"And what'd you sell if you had all you wanted?" I inquired in a lazy Socratic tone.

"All I ——"

He stopped. The idea was novel. He had to toy with it.

"All I wanted?"

Then with something like a snort:

"Can't have all you want o' nothin'. Not even o' trouble. Look at Williams. He goes huntin' it."

With renewed emphasis:

"Grahame ain't got all he wants. Man don't work like that to amuse hisself. I mean make others work—them niggers. Queer, ain't it? In this world you can't get all you want."

"I guess you got all you wanted this afternoon."

Hawkins rubbed his jaw and peered at me. It was dark, but he did not need light for the retort:

"An' you smell like a reg'lar sailor—all tar an' dish-water. Me? I was walloped like a man. But you—Humm! You got yours like as if you was a crippled girl." Well pleased with his wit, he began a self-satisfied tune and accompanied it by drumming on his belly. "I wisht I was in Dixie," he hummed. Then breaking off— "I never been in Dixie, but I like the tune."

His spirit was irrepressible. None others on the *Sally Martin* so much as smiled. Had the schooner carried a cargo of dead kings Hawkins's was the only manner that would have seemed unbecoming.

"Lord," he said with feeling, "I'd like to be ap-prehended for stealin' an' eatin' an ox—*an' be guilty!* Plenty to eat at Dakaru, anyway. Nice fat pigs. We'll catch a couple an' roast 'em."

He smacked his lips anticipatingly.

"Roast pig an' pineapple. Um-mm." A reflective pause.

"Knowing what I do about him, sort o' havin' some first-hand personal facts, so to speak, I know——well who to put my money on. I wisht he hit you—just one time. Knocked you so far we wouldn't had to waste no canvas wrappin' you. You led me into temptation, you did. Go on, Red Top. Tempt me some more. Ain't you got another un stowed away handy?"

I had. We drank it—toasting Williams.

CHAPTER VII

FATE, THE HUSSY, IS BOLDLY CHEATED

MR. DAVENANT subtly encouraged me and Hawkins to remember Williams's outburst. He sounded me with a chill delicacy. How did I feel about it? His words were not that blunt, and scarcely anything more than his manner asked the question.

It was well—or maybe it was unfortunate—that he sounded me first. Hawkins would have been responsive, bluntly so. He did not like Davenant anyway. And Hawkins's brain was not supple enough to be artful and devious.

Of course he would lie, as any man should. All honest men do at times. But Hawkins was particular about his lies, as well as sensitive about the color of his jaw and nose.

He might have mistaken Davenant's interest as literally adding insult to injury. In which case he would have shown even less finesse than he had. Without being properly prodded, it would have never occurred to him to encourage Davenant's sympathy. It would probably not have occurred to him that it was sympathy.

Now I—I exploded into hearty curses. But not until I had taken several precautionary glances in many directions. Davenant thought I was guarding against Williams. I was making sure that no silent, feminine figure in a long black cape was near.

I assured him that Hawkins was filled with a consuming fire that flowed through his veins like molten coals; that his belly had become a furnace.

He poured a judicious word or two into my ear to heighten what he thought was my anger, but did not commit himself. Williams had been unjust. He had seen all. He was very lonely. Couldn't I step into his room some time for a little friendly talk?

"If that charming niece of yours should fall overboard and stay there," I said, but not aloud, "I would look with more favor on your cabin as a hatchery of plots. But Raikes used to sneak in there—and Tom Gibson is wondering why it happened."

Aloud I expressed my thanks and intentions of accepting.

"By the way," he asked, looking at me from the corners of his eyes and trying not to appear very interested, "do you know why *he* is eager to get to Dakaru?"

No, I couldn't imagine why.

He probably thought that I lied. My luck runs that way.

Davenant walked off. Erect, with head well up, he stood perhaps watching nothing but his own thoughts. It was a comfortable gray day, with the sea tossing itself into crests that fell sizzling down the steep glassy sides of waves, and with the shrouds humming at times before the gusty blows of the wind.

I studied his back, tall and square and reserved in bearing. He had dignity, the dignity of manners. Williams had dignity of another kind—with the utter lack of manners; the dignity of a sheer, menacing personality.

I could imagine Davenant at ease among jewel-encrusted dowagers and men who bowed from the waist,

moving among them with cold grace, eying them with a sort of insolent sharpness that somehow would not be impolite.

Said I to myself: "The Lord in His goodness protects us innocents by making such as you wear on his countenance the devil's mark."

But my knowledge then of the devil was not nearly so intimate as is needful to secure an honest man from harm.

Hawkins was reluctant to accept any kind of intimacy with Davenant. He did not like him, or that woman with the serpent's lidless eyes. We would get ourselves into trouble. It was one thing to be hanged for piracy, another to be beaten to death for mutiny.

Joke? He could see Williams taking a thing like that as a joke. No. In years to come he expected to have grandchildren scrambling about his knees. How disappointed those grandchildren would be if they were never born, and so missed the tales he would tell as an ancient mariner.

He would, he said, cut a throat or bash a head cheerfully. It depended on whose throat or head. Mine, for instance, gladly.

I coaxed; what a good joke it would be to play on Davenant! Hawkins replied that the devil did not have a sense of humor. I urged that we could find out what he was after at Dakaru; that it was a rare chance; Davenant himself had already the idea that we were mutinous.

Hawkins objected. How much of it was fear of Williams, how much of it was the unvoiceable admiration that some men have for others who batter them in a fair fight, would be difficult to say. Maybe Hawkins had

caught something of that gleam from Williams's personality that fascinated me, made me, almost unwillingly at times, loyal to him, a follower.

I told Hawkins he had no finesse. He agreed, saying that whatever it was, he didn't want any either; that just then all he wanted was something to eat. So, declining to be serious, I gave up—but at the first chance conveyed to Davenant that Hawkins was desperate for vengeance.

"Raikes is a navigator, isn't he?" he asked in that stiff way of his that was very nearly awkward.

He knew better than I what Raikes had told him, but perhaps believing that all men were liars—as they are—wanted to see what I thought of it.

I assured him that Raikes might possibly hit some part of the mainland—or some similiar large landfall—by dead reckoning.

"Then Williams is the only man who can set a course?"

There was a bit of reluctance in his slow, cold words, as if he grudgingly gave Williams that credit.

"Oh, no," I assured him, rushing recklessly into his good opinion. "Half what Williams knows, I taught him. The only reason he hasn't been letting me take the bearings is because he doesn't want any one to know where he is heading."

"*You* are a good navigator?" he asked, drawing his lips back in an effort at an encouraging smile.

It was not a smile, but it tempted me to affirm what I had said.

"That simplifies matters. Very much. Very much indeed."

He spoke to me, but his thoughts were evidently busy elsewhere. Then—

"You know it is no crime to kill an outlaw."

The sentence was harsh. I have seen men killed. And maybe one or two will point a finger at me when we're all lined up for God to judge. But to murder in cold blood—not though the "outlaw" were my own enemy!

His saying that made me realize vividly, as I had not done before, how every hand was against Williams. It was no crime to kill him. The law would bless his murderer with gold. If he bowed down and worshiped the law, it would curse his murderer with the wrath of hemp.

"Thou shalt have no gods but my tablets," saith the Law.

A wise commandant, no doubt; but I know intimately whom it had banned, and the Law never recognizes personality—the only thing of value that a man can have. I could feel Davenant's sense of security. Cold and dark he stood, with his thumbs slipped into his side coat pockets, egging me on with that vindicating sentence, "It is no crime to kill an outlaw."

"I know. I know. But it's damned dangerous at times," I answered.

His eyes narrowed and he smiled the gleaming toothful smile through the crack that was his mouth, the mouth covered with black hair; and gave me a pitying, supercilious look.

"Not afraid, exactly," I explained. "But, you know, he pays well. Particularly those who strike at him—and miss!"

Said Davenant slowly, impressively, his eyes fast on me: "I can pay ten times better than he."

Pause.

"Particularly those who back from a bargain!"

I wished that I were drunk. Curious little shivers ran up and down my back. I wasn't fashioned to fence threats with men, or do bold things. Put me out of a jesting humor and my tongue was thick as a knotted fist, but with no such force to it.

And this fellow seemed impalpably closing in on me, getting me clinched, getting my signature down in my own blood to a bargain of his own terms. Yet there was nothing tangible to protest against. The threat didn't frighten me.

But some way the joke I was playing on him did not seem to have so much of a point as I had expected. Any minute I could laugh and tell him he was a fool. That is, if I *could* laugh. But he seemed getting at me with something more than words.

"Who sups with the devil must have a long spoon," says the proverb.

I wriggled about a bit. I was not cultivating Davenant's intimacy for the pleasure of his company, or merely to laugh at him for a dupe. He was not the sort of man one laughs at, any more than was that dark niece of his one to be taunted. The same sinister strain was in them. Perhaps one could be an antidote for the other, as poison neutralizes poison.

My purpose was to ferret out Davenant's plans at Dakaru. Williams wanted to know. So did I. It was strange, the way he was trying to get there. It was more strange that he should be going at all.

I mentioned "rewards" and what hope of having them if we went on to Dakaru.

He mentioned the reward on Williams's head.

I replied that one didn't need lay a course for Dakaru to get that. No. It would be necessary to put about for

Sydney. And as I would then be the only man on the ship who could navigate, why—there must need be inducements for going on to Dakaru.

He said the ship would be mine.

"When you haven't a clear title to give it to me—and Hawkins?"

I brought Hawkins in as a labored afterthought.

"Dakaru belongs to me and to my—to Dula Davenant. Wealth is there. You may help yourself."

A tempting offer, with Grahame and his savage overseers, armed, watchful, more watchful than on a previous visit.

I suggested that Grahame might not recognize the ownership or my right to compensation. I felt I was getting near to Davenant's secrecy.

"Grahame will have nothing to say," he replied irritably.

"That isn't like what Raikes told me," I flashed.

Just said it, without thinking. Raikes, of course, had told me nothing.

"What did Raikes tell you?" Davenant demanded, his head settling down slightly on his shoulder and his eyes catching hold of my face.

It was as if he looked from a mask. The same, or much the same, as Miss Davenant looked; as if a close-fitting mask were over the face and only the eyes revealed. Sometimes her eyes seemed half-hidden too.

"Ask him," I countered maliciously, feeling my spirits rise a little at having Davenant seem to be at a slight disadvantage.

"If Raikes told you the truth," he said slowly with something of menace in his voice—just whom the menace was directed at, would be hard to say—"you know

why Dakaru belongs to me. That"—a sharp snap of finger and thumb—"for Raikes!"

"But that"—imitating the snap of finger and thumb —"won't impress Grahame."

"No. But this will."

He half-turned and pushed back the tail of his coat, and his hand touched the butt of a revolver.

It impressed me, too. It was not so much of a braggart's gesture as it may seem; for though it was, of course, deliberately theatrical, it was accompanied by that slow, white smile.

The next few days we had our troubles. Hawkins said old Neptune had the stomachache.

I didn't know where we were, and much of the time I did not care. It was a case of water, water everywhere —and nothing to drink; for the perfidious Hawkins had raided my small store and been caught in the act by Raulson, the cook. Between them and the forecastle nothing was left but the carpenter's chest where I had cached a half dozen bottles. And that was not left long. The wind came up out of a glowing sky some time near midnight and stripped the masts with thunderous booms, and away we went, scudding under bare poles. Great combers rode the *Sally Martin,* stamping her under. She was lifted and shaken, as if to jar her ballast and turn her keel to the clouds.

Rain fell. It came in driving shafts of water, not as drops. By morning two boats were smashed, and the jolly-boat was gone from across the stern where she had been lashed.

The seas were tremendous. I was caught between the rails, and my lungs were strained to the bursting-point

before the deck rose clear; and my arms were nearly jerked from their sockets as my hands held on, while feet and legs swayed about. Had the sea been enraged at the impudence of a few insects strutting about on a thing of wood, the waves could not have seemed more sentiently determined to pound us to pieces.

Two men went overboard and were swept away into the night of wild water with only the faintest of cry out of the darkness. The others tumbled into the flooded forecastle and stayed there.

There was no working the ship, not though we had all been able sailors. There was nothing to do. Aft we were all frightened though some showed it in a way that others did not.

Probably because I was, I say the others were frightened. There is nothing I like more than a mild storm at sea, with the thunder comfortably in the distance, like deep reports from far battle-fields, with the waves surging and white, but not leaping the rail, a veritable host of watery pirates. But this mad storm shook my ribs clatteringly together.

Raikes and Hawkins and I, Miss Davenant and Davenant, in the fearful communion of those hours, stood about in the passageway like quiet strangers. That is, for a time—in the first appalling burst of the rage that shook heaven and sea, it seemed as if a second horde of evil angels were being driven out by the bolts of archangels.

Then Hawkins, nearly drunk and always weary on his feet, sat on the deck and soon sprawled in sleep, mumbling prayers and oaths in a nightmare of unrest. Raikes leaned nervously from side to side, his one glittering eye turning about like the gaze of a restless,

trapped animal. From time to time he said it was "a hell of a night," indifferent as to whether he was answered or heard.

All of us were soaked, for all had rushed on deck at the first arousing blast; and a thin sheet of salt water swashed about our feet. Hawkins lay in it, head on arm, indifferently. Though the night was not cold, we were chilled; a nervousness leaves one chilled.

Davenant was dressed, even to shirt and coat, but not collar. It took such a storm to make him forgetful of his immaculate appearance. He stared from one to the other of us, and stood listening—until thrown off balance by the violent lurches of the ship.

He said little. I remember his asking me if we were "doomed."

"And damned," I answered.

"A hell of a night!" Raikes put in, aroused by the sound of voices.

"Do you think the ship will sink?" Miss Davenant asked me.

I was honest and told her that I thought it would. I did not see how we could go long with such wind and waves without being piled on to a reef.

I did not explain all that to her, but I judged we were not more than three or four hundred miles off the mainland; and there are enough reefs and islands scattered about in those waters to wreck all the navies of the world in a week of bad nights; and there is something in the midst of a storm that makes one feel it will never end, that the order of nature has been changed, that the ship is dead and forever damned.

"Yes," I told her.

It may have been the heroic part for me to have

assured her otherwise, to have given her hope and all that which brave men do for fair women in times of peril. But she did not need my words. She took my answer with a steady look and shook her head slightly. No. She knew we would not.

It was not fear of death that made her hope. I remembered afterward that she was a fatalist. The earth can blow up, the sky cave in, but the fatalists have counted the sands that mark the hour and know that one by one the little grains must trickle through before Death dares smite the glass.

Her hair was loose. It had evidently been caught up in one swift swoop and pinned carelessly. She wore her cape, and under it the silken, thin hem of a nightgown hung. It touched the deck unless held up, and when she was thrown and put out her hands to steady and catch herself it fell to the water.

Her stockingless feet were thrust into slippers. through one of the slits in her cape her bare arm was extended, bracing herself now here, now there.

She was afraid, of course. We all were; anybody would have been; anybody always is in conditions of the kind, though there was none of that panicky excitement or agitation that traditionally—and seldom in reality—goes with fear. The man who has no fear in him is a clod. And she was vibrant, strung taut, her black eyes widened into a kind of unaffected wonder.

A few times her hand flew to her ear to shut out the thunder that seemed striking the deck. At such stunning, deafening, ear-crashing peals, that came stroke on stroke like the ragged volley of monstrous cannon fired within arm's reach overhead, I flinched as from an impending blow.

Two lanterns swung from beams, but the lightning, as if passing through the calked seams, reached our eyes dazzlingly, reached mine even through tightened lids.

Once, half-blinded by the sudden, instantaneous glare that, streaming like the swish of a flaming sword close as to strike off the end of a nose, came through the skylight, I tightened my eyes, turned my face down and pressed against them with both fists. And the ship lay on her beams' end.

Miss Davenant was flung against me. I caught her with circling arms. We slipped unsteadily, half-fell, and rocked with the righting of the ship—my arm still about her. It is difficult to speak of that half-minute and say what I mean, and not convey to too susceptible imaginations something that I did not mean. The contact *was* thrilling, but in some way not personal. When I dropped my arm she stepped back with a little laugh. There was no embarrassment about her, no thanks. And the laugh was not merriment so much as a kind of nervousness—something so natural as to be strange. Strange because I had been more than a little awed by her; awed by the embodied mystery and aloofness of her. But her body was soft and warm—a woman's.

No one noticed, though Davenant and Raikes could scarcely have helped seeing.

Hawkins rolled willy-nilly, grunted and swore; half-raising himself, he looked about in a stupid daze, damned wind, sea, ship, and fell drowsily against the bulkhead. He soon slipped prone, and slept.

She probably did not give the slight incident a second's thought. But I was awakened, made aware that for all of her pose and stiffness, her tragic aspect, she was a woman; her flesh was not marble, her breath was warm.

Yet the psychic distance between us was not decreased. She had fallen against me as she might have fallen against a stanchion; and laughed as she might have laughed then at her awkward mishap. But I had seen behind her mask—not necessarily understanding her the better for it. A woman whose body is heated by heart-beats, who is in spite of her rôle not the character she plays, is more intricate and bewildering than even a symbol.

At the risk of being misunderstood, I put it down that I liked her—without, perhaps, thinking any the better of her. I mean that I knew she was dangerous, I felt that she was wicked; but somehow I realized that it was not the cold, dispassionate fierceness of mere wickedness. In other words, that she was human.

A slight occasion for such subtle perceptions, no doubt. But I say that no man, whether by a moment's inadvertence or an evening's coaxing, ever embraced a woman without being the wiser for it. Some definite, convincing—though not necessarily correct—stimulus struck through his myriad surface nerves and, most often, reached his heart; or, as in my case, threw strong, though rather confused, impressions on his mind. Or, to make all this abracadabraic phrasing simple, I felt she was not —as I had feared—a mad woman. That two seconds of nervous, almost girlish, laughter was sane. And the way she drew from me was spontaneous, unaffected. Those were the only utterly natural things I had seen from her. Then too her body had been soft, pliant, warm.

I knew she was a murderess, but somehow those impressions dulled, blurred the knowledge. Besides, there was a storm overhead; and incidents of casual

significance hit with dominant vividness, take on undue importance, at such time.

I went up the companion and slipped the cover slightly. Nothing was visible except under the flashes of lightning, too often blinding; only there was occasionally the spectral white outline of a foam-crested wave that washed up out of the darkness. Wind, water and thunder filled the air; I doubted not that they filled the universe with stormy orchestration.

I tried to tell myself that death under the volleying thunders of Heaven's cannon, with the sea piling mountains of water for the grave-mound, with the epitaph scrawled in slithering foam, was death and nothing more or less than if one died abed. However, as a philospher I was a failure. It was no use to assure myself that though all the artillery of a nation might speak at the death of a king, and architects heap marble monuments over him, and poets write their fine lines for bronze tablets, yet all this would wear away and Judgment Dawn would find his burial-ground no more identified than a grave on the sea's bottom.

Had I been abed, with a charitable priest praying God to condone my sins, I would probably have thought what a miserable way to salute Death, and wanted to go down at sea with the full majesty of storm heralding the end.

The truth is, of course, that I didn't want anything to do with death; and just at that minute I could not remember any of those comforting maxims of philosophers that make a healthy man on a quiet day so reconciled to the embrace of the Dark Angel's fleshless arms. Not much. I wanted a warm inn and a rainy night, a dear and careless maiden with bright eyes to click a stone mug

with mine and join in the chorus of some deep-throated song that told the devil to go to hell and stay there.

I had no hope. Something more than the tossing ship, the flying wind and low-bent clouds puffing thunder and lightning, had got into me. I was frightened by an inner sense of tragedy as well as by the awful and more theatric fulminations, concatenations, bombilations, topsy-turvy flings of wood and water, and general uproar and outburst, as if Omnipotence were in an ultimate rage. Perhaps my sense of the dramatic made me feel that God would not skimp His climax. He had a ship-load of Jonahs and an ocean of whales, but nobody to throw us overboard into their mouths—so down must go the ship and all of us end our evil lives.

Evil, evil, evil? And what had we done?

Drunk, stolen and fought, and neglected to pray except at such moments as this—when the forgotten prayers could not be remembered.

I wondered if Williams prayed. There at helm he stood, feet to the bolted grating, his hands clinched at the wheel-spokes. The poop was fairly clear of the water, but waves hit him, rushed over him, pulled, wrestled and tugged at him, again and again.

He did nothing more there than a lashing on the helm could have done, would have done. He had to go before the wind though we went out of his course, and except for the flares of lightning he could not see forward of mizzen; nor was there a lookout.

It always seemed incredible that a ship, any man's ship, even one of the monstrous modern crew-driven iron-clads, could live through a real storm. The old ocean is big; its depth would engulf the highest mountain-range nor leave a peak to mark the spot; all the dry land of

earth could be shoveled into the seven seas, eaten, absorbed, vanished. And men treat that old ocean with insolent familiarity; pit their wood and will against it—and win.

Williams was out there perfectly aware that he could do nothing, except by the luckiest of chances. Even so he went through his days, and nights, seemingly without fear and with no hope. Just determination. Determination to go on, as if it were the fight and not the end, not the winning, that concerned him.

He had something in him that answered every challenge, even that of such a night as this. He would not quit, he would not shirk, he would not lash the helm and go below, trusting his luck and God. He may have had more faith in God than that—faith that He would not refuse good fortune to one who made the utter effort.

I doubt if Williams ever thought of God. Perhaps the men who serve Him most do not; at least the canting, prayful kind, the melancholic brotherhood so concerned with what is righteous and what is not, and praising God as courtiers do a crotchety king, appear to my biased eyes as serving Him less than laying up riches and honor for *themselves* in Heaven—the merchant princes of Eternity! But myself being one of the unregenerate of the earth, of course I am full of hope that by some inadvertence I shall have a harp and crown without having worked for it.

I was aware of somebody standing beside me, pushing against me. For some time we stood peering like peepers that had come upon fearful mysteries, our eyes just above the lowered companion cover.

The sea was a thousand molten hills. Lightning laced the sky with fiery chords, vanishing in half-seconds, but

illuminating—more illuminating than if the noon sun had been instantly turned on and off.

Thunders smote. Wind roared. Clouds of flying spray rose to meet the rain—downpouring as if all the deep-bottomed vessel of the sky were being emptied.

"Oh, this is wonderful—wonderful!" she half-sobbed.

I twisted myself around and tried to look at her.

I demanded what she would call terrible. I did not speak in any conversational spirit. I was irritated; or at least irritation must have been the basis of my feeling. There I was, frightened, shaken, by as fierce a storm as ever smote the sea—or I was willing to believe that it was—and she was admiring it.

She perhaps did not hear my question. Anybody who could not hear the terrible menace of the shrieking wind and solid blows of the water, beating like a legion of rams against our frail wooden walls, should not have been expected to hear absurd questions.

Presently: "This is the first thing of my life that has wholly satisfied me."

She was not talking to me. But I leaned close to her ear and shouted: "How?"

"And all you men are down here!"

There was a queer mingling of scorn and admiration in that. Evidently she was not in a mood to be questioned. Or maybe she really did not hear, her attention being concentrated.

Williams's was a striking figure amid the hurricane. He stood rigid as if cast in bronze, and naked except for trousers cut away at the knees.

The deck rose and fell, down, down, down with the long slow drop of a pitching ship, then up as if being

raised to the clouds. From time to time the water came over with a hoarse, engulfing rush and buried him to his waist, to his neck, occasionally it seemed covering him from sight. It was a distinct surprise to see him emerge each time, though I knew very well he could not be swept away. There was nothing courageous in his being there, though she thought it was the height of heroism. There was, however, a good deal of that strange quality of his which seemed to seize on the hardest, most grinding strain, and meet it.

Being covered and lost under water meant nothing to him. He was a good deal like a porpoise. But the blow of the water—that was something.

"I couldn't be afraid with——"

Her sentence stopped. The deck had been boarded by a moving mountain. I shot the cover fast to keep from being drenched.

At once her hands were pushing against it frantically.

"Let me see! Quick. I'm afraid—I must see!"

"Want to be drowned?"

"He'll be drowned!"

"No more 'an a fish."

"Open this——"

She pushed at me.

"You cowards!"

"Water—through here—smother us."

"Open it!"

Her fists were beating against the cover.

"He's all right."

"Open it! Why don't you open it!"

"Now listen——"

"Open it! Open it! Open it!"

From below Davenant called up apprehensively to know what was the matter.

I looked over my shoulder. Raikes had taken a step up the companion.

"You get back," I shouted.

He stepped irresolutely down.

Miss Davenant had stopped talking and was struggling. Savagely, as if struggling for air, she pushed and beat and jabbed. Her strength was surprising.

She slipped the cover. The mountain had slid off. The deck was clear of water.

In a flare of lightning Williams was still there as if he had passed through nothing more than a wisp of fog. He was leaning slightly forward, eyes set to pierce the darkness, or rather to catch the farthest distance in the quick thrusts of lightning.

"Can't I go out there?" she asked.

She didn't expect me to say anything other than, "No." At least I was sure she didn't. So I said:

"Of course. You'll be carried over quicker 'an you can ask God for mercy."

"I'll never ask for mercy!"

It sounded as if she was speaking between clinched teeth. Perhaps she was. The surprises of her were infinite. That was a crazy thing to say at such a time.

"What would you do out there?"

"I would feel at home—at last!"

She said it almost gaily, in sudden good humor, but not as pleasantry. I believe she meant it. Perhaps the repressed, tearing, destructive powers within her found expression in the unlimited noise of sky and surge of water.

There is nothing intelligible about women when they

break, as most of them do at some time or other, from under the seal of Solomon, or of other wise men, fathers, brothers, husbands; and like the jinn out of the fisherman's bronze bottle, take on the strange shapes and release stranger forces which, since they are common to almost all women, must be called feminine.

I said something about being afraid, that it was surprising in her not being; and asked if she did not know what fear was. It was a good chance for her to assume conceited falsehood and deny it. But she did not. She said that she had been afraid all of her life—but never in thunder-storms.

"I am terribly afraid of *him!*" she whispered in a hurried confessional, jerking her head slightly to indicate the foot of the stairs.

At that moment, and for that moment only, she seemed young, girlish. I have often wondered as to her age.

"Raikes?"

"No-no!" Then, whispered with teeth shut: "The black beast!"

"Davenant?"

Maybe she nodded, or it may have been the jerk of the ship. And the sudden warning *shh-sh-h* may not have, possibly did not, come from her. The water hissing about the deck and the sibilant spray may have made the sound. My imagination, being nimble, often plays tricks.

"They can't hear us. Why?" I asked.

"No." Then with cutting indifference: "He is no worse than others."

Not dawn, but a barely palpable gray, oozed out of the black sky. The thunders were being withdrawn to

a distance, like a retreating rear-guard. The wind, dying, was still a whistling blast, but not a fury. The sea was wild, moving forward with billowing rushes; and the *Sally Martin* went with it, headlong, plunging and rearing.

I had been up and down the companion several times, restlessly wondering what to do. I was tired and I ached, and there was no place for rest.

Raikes had disappeared, probably to his bunk, where no doubt he lay in wet clothes. Davenant sat on a chair by the doorway of his cabin, looking worn and drawn, but watchfully waiting for—what?

Probably at the back of his head had been the vague idea of taking to the boats if the ship floundered. It would have been as safe to cling to a pine-knot on a lake of fire. Besides, the boats were smashed.

Where did these people get their vitality, I wondered. For two hours Miss Davenant had been standing on the companion. Williams, of course—I was not surprised at anything he did. I sometimes thought that he sought exhaustion in any way and form the better to sleep.

Hawkins had more than vitality; he had a magic sense of oblivion. He simply had drawn a little circle around himself and shut the night terrors out. Not altogether, though, for there had been mumbled oaths.

I came down and put a foot into his ribs.

I told him this wouldn't do. He stirred, rumbling mightily, and put his hands to his head, groaning.

"I wish it had been poison," I said.

He had, I am sure, drunk at least two quarts the previous evening—and all it did was make him drowsy. He smacked his dry lips, wanting water.

"We came near throwing you over to lighten ballast," I said.

"Why didn't you?" he growled. "I'm sick, man. Lord, what's happenin' *now?*"

A ton of water came down the stairs, and a shout from the deck above. The schooner rocked drunkenly, bobbing in a seaway. A fine jamboree. I looked up the companion. The cover was off. Miss Davenant was not in sight.

As I started up I glanced sidewise and carried with me an impression of Davenant's indignant, astonished face, the salt spray dripping from his black beard. He was wet as a drowned cat, and seemed to have a feline aversion to the water—at least on his beard.

Again the shout from the deck. It was Williams calling.

Up I tumbled with a hundred fears at my throat, and not one of them shameful. I was sure Dula Davenant had been washed over. She wasn't but I came near being, for I leaped out into a waist-high wave—much of which went on down the companion and threw Davenant, who was following, back against Hawkins.

The booming oaths of Hawkins rose above the seething and splash of water. I heard them from where I was stranded—with a whole side of ribs apparently broken—against the rail.

For a moment my sense of sight was confused; I saw so much at once. For one thing there in the misty haze of a black morning, on our lee, a mile or so ahead, lay wallowing helplessly what had been a proud full-rigger. She lay half-under, stern down, probably from a leak and shifted ballast, and slowly turned around and round—a living derelict.

The mainmast had perhaps been sprung, and cut away. At least it was gone, and the others remained. Some of the sails were furled, and others were gone with only wisps of flying rope. She had evidently been caught by surprise.

There were clusters of black spots in the fore-rigging where the crew hung like insects. Below them wolfish waves leaped; yes, with even foam-flecked jaws.

But I turned my eyes from the foundering ship to look at our own helm, where Williams stood with his arms actually about Dula Davenant. What really happened of course I never knew. But I did know about the only thing that could have happened.

Perhaps with the lessening rage of the sea she peered farther and farther out, until—either reckless or catching sight of the wrecked ship—she ran on deck. A wave caught her, and she was swept or struggled close enough for Williams to snatch her.

In doing so he let go the helm, and the schooner promptly veered. There was no other way for him to hold her and grasp the helm too, than by pressing her between wheel and his breast; and he had shouted.

It may have been mean of me; it may have been even a little vicious; but said I to myself, even as I pressed a hand to my aching side—

"A woman gets what she wants though men die and ships go down, though sky and sea clamor and fight."

Further meditations were interrupted. Davenant and Hawkins and Raikes were on deck, scrambling and sliding about, and grasping whatever they could to hold on, and staring across to the wreck.

"McGuire!"

Williams did not need add:

"Come here and take this woman."

He conveyed it in one word. With much wavering I made it across the deck, and caught her arm and waist.

"I won't go down there," she said firmly, holding back.

She was soaking wet. Even the heavy cape sought clingingly the curves of her body.

"It's dangerous——"

"I don't care."

It wasn't stubbornness. It was intention. She did not intend to go below—and she didn't.

At that moment if Williams had said to throw her overboard I would have been pleased. It was for a raging second precisely what I wanted to do.

I let go, throwing up all responsibility for her. She could do as she pleased. She braced herself between the companion and skylight and remained there, all eyes.

No ribs of mine were broken, but it would have made no difference had they been. Williams gave me the wheel and cut himself loose from the grating. He said to let her drift down close to the wreck.

"For God's sake, you're not goin' to try——"

But he was gone.

Seas were still coming at intervals over the waist, but he plunged forward, roused the forecastle, broke out hawsers, bent an end to a spar and cast it over in the desperate, mad hope of having it drift down against the wreck. It was dangerous business, as well as seemingly futile.

In the first place there was little more than blind luck to carry us near enough; and being carried that near gave the risk of collision. Moreover the chance of any man leaping into the water and reaching the hawser

or spar was not to be thought of; and of living through it, if he did, was even less to be believed.

But excitement got into us. For the first time, and that after a wearing, dispiriting night, there were rushing and eagerness among the men as they anxiously paid out the hawser and calculated the diminishing distance. The sodden stern of the wreck, so low in the water that the mizzen-yards were under, gave her a slower drift.

There is something eternal in men that makes them strive to help the danger-stricken; an ennobling quality that may be sheltered from view for the better part of a lifetime, but it appears with sudden flare of courage when the risk is greatest, the chance least hopeful. Strangers all; and when one ship comes down on another in distress, the daring sacrifice is made.

The yearning to help is intense, often more overpowering than the desire to live—a thing scarcely believable unless one reflects on the records, authenticated, of the sea. The ocean is a fearful mistress, and her lovers must be fierce men, ready to pay with flesh, blood and bones—as in the wooing of other mistresses they pay with their gold and their honor—and there is no jealousy between them, at least not in the midst of danger.

All that we could do had been done. And our crew waited, sometimes breast deep in water, unnoticing, indifferent.

A faint cheer, scarcely more than a distant echo, came from the rigging. It was thanks rather than hope; and acknowledgment of what, to those poor devils anyway, seemed chivalrous. It was more than chivalry. It was madness.

As we drifted closer and I hastily put down the helm, Williams said to let her drift, to collide with the wreck

rather than miss it. One minute it looked as if a collision was unavoidable, the next that we would go by far out of reach. If we hit the wreck, we ourselves would be one; but Williams would dare anything.

The ocean is maddening in drawing out its strain on men's hearts. Its tragedies are slow. Fire breaks out and may last a day, or days. A ship that is lost takes, usually, many hours to fill and sink while men climb topmast yards as if to be nearer Heaven with their prayers. Storm-driven, a ship sights breakers ahead, and nothing is possible but to wait, minute on minute, till she strikes—or, by a miracle, misses.

Strange that the reliant, defiant, hard-fighting, audacious breed of seamen should be the ones who most frequently are stricken numb, or might as well be, certainly rendered powerless, while the forces about them move on slowly, inevitably, to the sad end or to the miracle.

So we drifted down on the wreck—we, shipping a sea at every roll, came broadside, rocking down the seaway. The spar, though cast astern, being lighter, floated more rapidly.

There was a chance that the hawser would come in contact with the wreck as we drifted by. There was also the hope that the spar would get caught in the wreck's rigging, and we would have a slightly better chance of getting some of the crew on board—if the hawser did not part, as it would be almost sure to do in that sea, with the wreck holding back.

There were all kinds of chances, but what must have been the sensation of the fifteen or twenty men in the rigging? Invisible dice were being shaken for their

lives. No, not even a miracle could save them all. Perhaps nothing mortal could save any of them.

From the time we had first seen them they had hung in the rigging, motionless or scarcely stirring—like flies on a screen in the cold. As they saw what was trying to be done, there was movement among them.

The ship had unmistakably been settling. She was now more than half under—her deck had a sharper slant, and the foremast was at times—in the course of the ship's slow, weary plunges, as if she was very tired and hope-forsaken—fairly parallel with the ocean. Her bows were thrust sharply out of the water.

In her slow turning around, like a watertop making its last, reeling revolutions, the upreared forecastle completely cut off from view the fore-rigging; then, the men coming into view again, we could see them scrambling about. There was a movement among them to get out on the yard, a cluster of forms; and one, two, three, dropped into the water. Distinct cries were heard.

"My God!" roared Hawkins. "They're fightin'!"

They were.

We were some two hundred or less yards off and could see plainly that those poor doomed wretches, right on the edge of life's end, were fighting madly to get out on the yard to what seemed to them the best position from which to jump for the black thread with the tooth-pick attached. Some were knocked off. Some jumped with the hope of scrambling up the forecastle to the bowsprit. None made it. For an instant we could see bodies tossed sprawlingly on a wave's crest, then submerged.

"Look at the big fellow—they're pullin' him off——"

"He's fallin'— No— There!"

"Ow!'

A man whom the others seemed instinctively to have turned on had been beating his way out on the yard-arm. He was pushed off his balance and seemed falling but caught himself and jerked down one above him who had kicked out.

Agilely the big man was back on the yard, enemies on both sides—but they were afraid. Foot by foot he worked himself out, turning every second to strike at any who came within reach from behind.

He moved on toward the two men in front. These gave way. They were crowded out—right out to the end, and among the cries heard seemed cries for mercy.

Perhaps not. Then the man on the extreme end turned against his companion; he aided the big fellow in throwing off the one between them. That is what it looked like.

Cries of anger went up from our deck, and I detected the sharp, quick, fierce exclamation of Dula Davenant under, rather than above, the voices of the others, of whom Hawkins's was the loudest. There were angry, outraged cries, too, from the rigging. But the man on the extreme end, if his purpose had been to placate the big fellow, gained nothing. The two bodies were merged for a moment, turned on the yard, heads down and legs encircling it—then one fell away.

The big fellow clawed himself up, twisted his head around and shook his fist at men behind him who had started out; but dared not come close. As he shook his fist he must have yelled a curse, for seconds later—after the fist was lowered and he had faced around, looking for the drifting spar—the oath reached us.

The other end of the yard was covered with men, and

slowly the wreck revolved. Luck was to determine who should have the better chance.

It was now clear that the hawser would strike against the ship, but the heavy hawser sagged so low in the water that it would probably do no service as a thing to hold on to. The ship was going lower and lower, so slowly as to be imperceptible except by the higher reach of the waves as they leaped for the yard, hungrily.

A turn was taken around our mast and Williams, calculating how much to take in so as to bring the spar against the wreck, to give the men something graspable to leap for, had the hawser hauled in. Our deck was slippery and rocking.

The sea was running high but steadily, and the poop was flooded with spray, but no more big waves came over. If they had, the *Sally Martin* would have gone on her way alone.

The men gave a hand with a hearty shout. Even Davenant pulled, though without the shout. Hawkins laid his enormous weight against the line, and little Raikes yelled cheerily. To pull a hundred yards of hawser with a stop-water bent to it is work for a capstan, or better, for a donkey-engine.

Miss Davenant was shivering. Her face was pale, her lips were blue, actually blue as indigo. But from the way she looked at that hawser and the struggling, tugging men I knew that under her cape her hands were clenched and that she strained with them.

The spar actually struck the protruding keel of the wreck, coming almost directly below the yard where half a dozen men clung in a desperate companionship. Before it struck some had jumped—and were at once swirled away by the eager water.

It was not easy to be sure of what one saw in that brief time and amid that boiling foam and those lunging waves; but it seemed that two or three caught hold, and again and again it appeared that all were shaken off. They were so covered with water that one could not tell. Probably one *was* crushed, as it appeared when the spar bumped into the wreck.

We could distinctly hear men left in the rigging praying and one strong voice cursing.

The wreck was setting with that—no, this isn't a freak phrase—with that slow rapidity that comes over a ship, which, having struggled valiantly, gives up. That is, it sank steadily, perceptibly, and yet with a slowness that eminently befits the inevitable. There is no need for haste in doom.

We feared, and with reason as the ship was now rapidly sinking, that the spar would get caught in the rigging and be drawn down. Another five minutes and the proud four-master would be gone. If none came from her deck to ours, we would have to assure one another that the sight of her had not been a dream; that we really saw it. So completely, with such utter finality, does the ocean wipe out her tragedies.

There was one man left on that wreck who did not yield to the decisions of fortune. Luck decreed that he should be left dangling from the lee side when the spar came within reach; but luck seems to have been meant for those who do not care to put forward their own efforts.

He fought his way across that yard as he had not fought before. Men too timid to leap for the water and snatch at the only chance—no matter how desperate—to be rescued, were scarcely of the fiber to stop so deter-

mined a man as himself. He smote and pushed. Fellows —so it seemed—who would not jump for the chance of being saved fell away, frightened, to escape his blows. It may be that they had reached a suicidal despair, and plunged out of life to escape a last buffeting from heavy fists. No doubt they had had enough of blows. Most men have had enough to win tears from Heaven. Let us hope the records are honest that tell of suffering as well as of sin. If so, there will be roistering songs echoed through the marble halls, and strange-looking saints rolling drunkenly down the Golden Street.

That big man did not hesitate. He leaped, and we could tell that he missed. As if to taunt him, a wave's crest flung the spar up so that for an instant it seemed suspended in air, and the figure of another man was hanging there wildly, formless as a rag.

But the man of a dozen battles in the rigging had not jumped to drown. He must have been a powerful swimmer. He drove for that spar as a man fights for life; and that was what he fought for.

"Slack away!" Williams cried.

And the hawser was paid out to give more drift to the spar; but before the line paid out had affected the position of the spar, the man had reached it. He clinched one arm about it, threw his feet over, and raised the other arm in a gesture of triumph. We heard his shout.

The next instant we saw that he was alone on the spar. I thought to myself, grudgingly admiring him, that he must be amphibian; perhaps scales were on his body. He was under water more than above it. How he managed to breathe I do not know.

Scientific men in their wisdom say that the rudimentary gills, inherited from piscatorial ancestors, are in the

throats of all of us. I sometimes suspected natives of using those gills still; they seemed so indifferent as to whether they were under water or had their noses out. Williams was like that, too. And this man.

Williams again, was tense and active. His words cracked. Men jumped, not through fear but eagerness.

"Throw your weight to it, men. Heave-o! Now, altogether. Heave-o! Now—heave-o!"

And each heave-o was answered with a chorus of strained grunts. Hawkins, with a turn of the hawser about his enormous body, braced himself like an anchor with feet against the coaming of the companion and took up and held all the slack that came over the taffrail.

The spar now trailed dead astern, and we had passed the wreck. Williams stood first to the hawser, and after him a line of men like a tug-of-war team. At times the sea seemed to snap the spar back, and the hawser hummed out of the water, shivering spray; and at such moments, Williams and the others would have been forced to let the line play out except for Hawkins, braced like a mud-hook in a rock-pile.

The pull of the hawser and spar assisted me materially at the helm in bringing the schooner around so that the wind was astern, and the sickening, unsteadying roll as she had drifted down in the seaway was gone. I had my head turned over my shoulders most of the time. It may have been bad seamanship, but I never claimed—except deceitfully to Davenant—to have any other kind.

The wreck went down very slowly, but down, down, down, with sodden heaviness; and there were still figures in the rigging. When only the tip of the forecastle was visible the water about it was suddenly flung up as from an explosion. I had heard that decks blew up from air-

pressure in sinking ships, but I thought it one of the myths of the sea.

There was more than the burst of water; a sullen, smothered roar followed, and the ship vanished—even the mast going hastily out of sight from where, for an instant, it had alone been visible like a desperate imploring arm.

No wreckage that I noticed came up; and for a few moments there was a white surge of waters, as if the wolf-waves had bent their heads to the feast. Then the high swells rolled over and over the spot, scattering the swirl of foam, and there was no mark or sign to tell where the mighty ship had gone. Only one left of her crew, and he was smotheringly wrapped about a piece of wood, from which any moment he might be washed.

"Was what he did murder?"

The question without being invited yelped at my thoughts.

"Was it murder to hasten by two ticks of the clock the death of doomed men? Murder to knock the weaker aside—who would have failed had they tried—and snatch his own life from the sea?

"I don't envy God," I said to myself.

I felt that the man would never be brought on deck. Someway it seemed to me that, for one thing, Fate was too ironical to allow success to such overweening impudence from mere men. Fate might, in her cynical mood, bring our ship out of the night to sight the wreck; permit the incredible chance of hawser and wood to drift through a storming sea and reach that wreck; let one man of a score kick his fellows and Death, too, aside and beat through the waves to grasp that wood, and let

him hang on until he was within reach of grasping, succoring arms—then pluck him off.

But as much as she had meddled with him, Fate did not know Hurricane Williams. That—a flip of a finger—for her; as for any of her sex. Fate was too feminine to have his respect.

Believe it or not, I don't care. But Williams in his madness probably guessed what Fate intended: that the man, weakened, half—more than half—strangled, would be shaken off when he was raised between water and deck. He would probably slip down the spar as a ring from a stick.

I am not telling this to be believed. I am telling it so I shall never have to reproach myself for shunning the truth for fear of being thought a liar.

What happened was this: When the hawser had been hauled in so that the man lay almost under our stern, and he made no move, gave no recognition of his near safety, and could not be aroused by shouts, but hung on as if frozen there in the death-grip, then Williams—carrying a line, but with none about him—slipped down that hawser, into the sea, and made the line fast about the body of the unconscious man. It is simple to tell it; and landsmen may believe it.

Then Williams, hand over hand, climbed up that swaying, rocking hawser, being bumped and battered against the ship, and was seized and dragged on board by the eager arms of men who had cursed him hourly from that Australian night when he had herded them on to a stolen ship. Together, hawser and line were hauled up; and the man *did* slip from the spar, and but for the line about his waist he would have plunged into the sea. His body was actually cramped rigid in the position of

arms and legs circling the spar—such had been his determination to hang on. And he was dragged on board the *Sally Martin* a drowned man.

"Fate wins!" I said to myself.

But mere drowning was nothing to Williams. Feverishly he worked and set others to work, and they rubbed and slapped those big limbs into relaxation.

The body was lifted face down so that water ran from the man's throat and nose, and for three unyielding hours men were kept at work over that unconscious figure—long after it began to breathe they rubbed and moved the arms to aid the lungs.

And not for a moment of any of that time was Dula Davenant off the deck. Her cheeks were no longer pale. They were flushed.

So it was that "Red" Shaylor, mate of the *Roanoke*, bound from San Francisco to Sydney, came on board the *Sally Martin*.

CHAPTER VIII

TROUBLES, TROUBLES EVERYWHERE!

I REALIZED in a few days that Dula Davenant was making a companion of me. I came near saying "a friend," which shows how quick men are to assume too much from the slight, if not dubious, attention of women —if the women are attractive.

She was often near me. She spoke to me casually and stood as if trying to say something more, but hesitating.

I did not understand. It embarrassed me just a little. Not much, for she was pretty without being at all like other women whom I had thought pretty.

Perhaps my taste is generous. Besides there are so few uninteresting women in the world. None if the dominant chords of their personality are struck. Though a woman is far from being a lyre in my fingers to play on as I please. More often I am soft clay in hers.

I asked myself what she was wanting; and myself gave no answer. With a sense of agitation, a real flutter, I at last perceived that she was treating me as the lesser of two evils. She came near me, stood near me, talked and pretended to talk to me to avoid Red Shaylor, late of the *Roanoke*.

The first person Red Shaylor had seen when he opened his eyes in Williams's bed had been Miss Davenant; and she had filled them. He had slept for hours without becoming conscious. And she, since there was

work and lots of it for the tired men, had, without rest herself, but with that woman's substitute for rest—a careful toilet—sat by him to watch.

I do not suppose there was any kindness in her, any tenderness at all. Just passion, and not that as the word is generally used.

I believe she would have let Red Shaylor, or any other man, die without a flicker of her eyelid if it had not been that every protoplasmic cell of her belonged—in that utter way that women once in a lifetime, never twice, perhaps most of them never the once, give themselves to some man—to Williams.

That he did not want her was of no consequence. No more than the wanting, the intense desire, of other men would have changed her attitude toward them. She loved him.

Love to a woman usually means petting. But that isn't love. It is merely gratification of the desire to have her fur stroked, and pink ribbons put around her neck, and bowls of thick cream for her little red tongue to lick, and a soft cushion before a hearth. Women pretend the cushion and hearth show the domestic instinct. Then, along comes a stranger. Love bursts open the heart of the petted woman, and out into the storm and mud, to be perhaps a lean alley-cat and grow gaunt and hungry, the woman goes. That is sin—and only the sinful know that fierce, heedless, sacrificial love-passion that in life is all that the poets claim for it in romance. So Dula Davenant loved.

For that reason she sat in Williams's cabin and watched beside the man Williams had pulled from the water, and perhaps stroked his hard, rough forehead and thought of Williams.

Red Shaylor was an oak of a man, gnarled and hard. His hair was sandy; not red, for instance, as mine.

He had an old scar, big as half a hand, on the side of his head, filling the space between cheek, temple and ear. Maybe somebody caught him from the side when he wasn't looking, but did not hit hard enough.

His face was molded thickly and firmly, every feature prominent and well shaped to the point where refinement would have begun had the features not been so thick. The face looked as if it might have been molded roughly by a good artist who had abandoned the clay, having perhaps become dissatisfied, or convinced that after all his ideal could not be worked into that lumpish countenance.

Shaylor was big-chested. He was scratched and blackened with bruises.

He told us that his name was Red Shaylor. There was a certain harsh pride in the way he said it. None of us knew of him. He seemed rather to think that some of us might have heard his name. He had been going up and down the sea for twenty years, he said.

Men called him Red Shaylor. He repeated that. It couldn't have been because of his hair, and certainly not because of his complexion.

Dula said that when he awakened he lay motionless a long time, looking at her. She thought he was paralyzed or something, for he did not answer even when she repeatedly spoke.

He explained later, with a curious watchful air as if to see whether everybody was listening—it was an air that we soon got used to, for he talked much—that he thought he had died, and couldn't imagine why he was not in hell.

He had heard of Williams. Dula had told him, no doubt with a good deal of the restrained pride which I noticed—I was looking for it, or any other signs—when she mentioned Williams or referred to him.

I know Shaylor did not notice the pride. He noticed nothing that required the least psychological penetration. He was made of coarse clay; the thing called delicacy, either of mind or body, was as remote from him as from a rhinoceros. By that I do not mean what mere *vulgarity* implies. But, for instance, when Williams came in the first thing Shaylor said was, after half-turning and rising on his elbow and staring with a sort of loose-jawed curiosity:

"So you are Hurricane Williams, are you?"

And if there had been nothing else that manner and question made Dula Davenant hate him. I, who had followed Williams in, hated him too.

Williams ignored the question, ignored the manner, asked how he felt and did not appear to listen to the answer. With a surprising directness he caught Shaylor's wrist and felt of the pulse, sent for food and went out. Without a word, without looking back, she went out too.

"Say, Mate, who is she?" Shaylor demanded, sitting up.

"I've *heard* that her name was Miss Davenant."

"His woman?"

"Whose?"

"This Hurricane Williams's. Blast me, why he's a *little* man. I thought——"

"Yes, it's the general opinion. Among those who never ran under his bow."

"What you talkin' about?"

"That Williams must be a giant. We've got a giant on board, too. His name's Hawkins. Ask him how big Williams is. You'll learn something interesting."

"Look here, what you givin' me? You never heard o' me? Red Shaylor they call me. That's his woman, huh?"

"As a matter of fact, he's not so very *little* as you call it; round a hundred and eighty. But all his weight's inside of him. Jumps out now and then. Talk with Hawkins."

"Say, I've asked you three times. Is that his——?"

The word he used may be only suggested. It is the vilest that coarse tongues apply to the woman utterly degraded. I was neither shocked nor surprised; it was perfectly natural that he should say that.

"Do you know how you got on board?" I asked.

"I caught that topmast you threw over. Good work an'——"

"No. You were dragged up by your toes. This Hurricane Williams—the *little* man—went over the side after you. In that sea, too."

Raulson, the cook, came in with a tray and I went out.

In the confusion of work and incidents and weariness—but not nervousness, my body had lost its power to be thrilled or agitated; nothing mattered; I was sober—I don't remember just the sequence of happenings, and probably wouldn't use it if I did.

I had forgotten my mutinous agreement with Davenant. His was the better memory. There was, in a slight way, a shock to me in being reminded. Much had happened since then. And the joke I had been in mutinous talk at that time was now quite remote.

"This man Shaylor—it will be easier with him?" Davenant inquired, his eyes askance and the rows of white teeth showing through the black herbage of his face.

I think that Davenant tried to be familiar, perhaps intimate. He did not know how. It is really an art, or rather a gift.

I noticed the same involuntary coldness in Dula. She had much that was not voluntary, but even when she tried to talk familiarly with me there was an unconscious hesitancy. With Davenant the effort was quite close to awkwardness, if there can be such a thing in a person who nevertheless seems entirely composed and at ease.

"This man Shaylor," Davenant had said. "It will be easier with him?"

"Shaylor? Shaylor?" I asked with rising inflection, as if much surprised. "After Williams pulled him out by the nose! Why, Mr. Davenant, Williams saved his life!"

He looked at me studiously. There seemed something to be said for that point. It may have been that he knew what happened the afternoon Shaylor came on board; or it may have been that in his cynical understanding of human nature he believed that thirty pieces of silver had been more than was needed to bribe Judas.

Bending sails on to a schooner at sea in a light breeze with swells running high, is not the easiest work for even old hands. And Williams wanted the sails on. He was being carried off his course.

I must say it for Raikes, that he did his best, ably and willingly. I must say for myself that I shirked as

much as I could, having a very strong aversion to any kind of work aloft—or below. Any place.

Williams needed the help of a real seaman. Of several. Shaylor had had six or seven hours' rest, and there was nothing the matter with him but a little stiffness and a few bruises; though a more humane skipper would probably have allowed him to rest for a week.

Williams sent one of the men to tell Shaylor to come on deck. I don't know what manner of message the fellow delivered; but he came back with these words:

"The bloke says for you to bleedin' well go t' 'ell, sir!"

Not a muscle of Williams's body moved. He did not hesitate. He simply said snappishly, but no less so than in giving the first order:

"McGuire! On deck! Tell him."

I found Shaylor sitting up, on his face the satisfied grin of a man waiting for trouble. He was one of those bucko mates that love women and blows about equally; one of those men whose hard life has taught them to take and give with their fists.

"Oh, it's you," he said. "That guy tell 'im what I said?"

"He probably softened it down a bit. What did you say?"

Shaylor loosened a score of curdling oaths.

"Yes, he softened it down quite a bit. Supposing you come on deck and tell him that. I can't remember it all. He ought to hear it."

"By God, I'd tell him!"

"I am sure you would. Yes, I am very sure of it. And I want to hear you."

It would be difficult to say just how Shaylor's atti-

tude impressed me. I believe I understood it; that is, had his view-point.

He probably thought of Williams as that man who figured in the half-drunken gossip of sailors' boarding-houses and saloons: The outlaw who hadn't the courage to be a pirate and make his stake; the "nigger" lover; the bully. And possibly Shaylor was filled from the same sources of resentment as is a pretty woman when she hears of one whose personal charms have brought her more notice. That had an influence, I am sure.

For another thing, as the lone survivor of the *Roanoke,* Shaylor naturally felt himself entitled to certain consideration. The lone survivor is almost always for a time regarded as something of a hero. And being by nature one who resented a bullying order from anybody not authoritatively above him, and seldom averse to a fight, he answered indignantly.

In retrospect I really sympathize with his feeling. Williams would offend anybody. He was direct as a bullet, more unfeeling than a huntsman among his hounds. The result of the influences I have mentioned, and possibly others I have not thought of—to say nothing more of Shaylor's general character—was that he was angry.

"I'm Red Shaylor," he said, squaring his shoulders.

"My dear Mr. Shaylor, I haven't a doubt in the world of it. If anybody else should pop over our rail an' insist on his being Red Shaylor, I would call him a liar. Yes, sir. I would!"

He stared at me. I almost put it down that he stared at me through parted lips. At least he seemed unable to stare without loosening his jaw.

"What's the matter with ever'body on this craft?

All got your ballast shifted. Who in hell could come on board an' say he was Red Shaylor? I'm him. Never saw such damn fools."

I bowed discreetly before the gale, and reminded him of my wish, the wish of all the crew, that he would go on deck and personally deliver his message to Williams. I assured him we would all rejoice, possibly cheer.

"Think I'm 'fraid o' that——?"

I said it was impossible to think so. And added craftily that it would be impossible to think so if he went on deck, as I suggested.

Then up rose Red Shaylor and hurriedly got into the shirt and tarred trousers that had been placed beside his bed. The play of his naked muscles as he dressed was impressive. He was a powerful man.

Barefooted, he stamped out, his shoulders drooping and his arms swinging with resolution. I came pattering after, eager not to miss a word.

Williams was standing on the forecastle-head looking aloft.

Shaylor came up and stopped truculently.

Williams did not notice him. But every man of us saw, and watched.

"Say, d'you send for me?" Shaylor demanded.

Williams glanced at him; then directly, meaningly, but only as if he saw a familiar seaman, told him to take charge of bending on the mainmast sail, adding that these were green hands and he would have to show them what to do. He pointed to the sail, folded at the foot of the mast, and with a gesture put three or four men—myself among them—at Shaylor's disposal.

That was all. Williams turned his head aloft to where Raikes was setting the block for the leech-line and

swearing eloquently at a sheave that refused to move. He had begun to swear at the precise instant that Williams looked up.

Raikes suddenly pretended great difficulty in getting on with the work. A moment before, though with only one eye, he had been watching as hard as any of us.

Red Shaylor hesitated. He stared at Williams for a handful of seconds, looked aft toward the sail, up at the mast, again at Williams; and all might have been well had he not by the merest chance allowed his eyes to rest for a moment on my face.

I gave no sign at all. But that reminded him that I had heard his boast.

I haven't a doubt but that men in sober minutes have done murder to make good drunken boasts. Though they carelessly break any other kind of a promise, they respect their own boastings.

Shaylor began. Because he talked rapidly, self-infuriated, he probably got out a half dozen of his hard, curdling oaths—then he went backward down the forecastle ladder, having straightened up to evade the flash of a fist at his face, and thereby receiving the one intended—with a hundred and eighty pounds behind it—for his stomach. Shaylor doubled up much like a rag dummy and, because he had no footing behind him, fell as if actually knocked through the air.

It was a smashing blow and a crashing fall. But it did not kill him. It should have, but men of that day had their souls sealed up in tougher flesh than is common now.

I had seen Williams in fights of all kinds. I never knew him really to be taken off his guard, unaware. That was probably because he was always tense, always

strained, always suspicious, and had the remarkable faculty of throwing himself in any direction as suddenly as an arrow leaves a bowstring. The irony of having to knock down a man whom he had but a few hours before pulled from the sea was merely another of those queer, cynical bits of fortune that were always coming upon him.

It was not a cheer that came from the men. There were impulsive exclamations, congratulatory. Too repressed to have been insincere; too suddenly spoken for being intended to please Williams. That is, they had had no time to be prepared to cheer the winner. It was all over in five seconds, if not less.

I was surprised to see their sympathy was with Williams. I had not been with him when he and Hawkins fought.

No doubt the fact that Shaylor refused work when they were short-handed had something to do with it. Then too men are always inclined to admire the one who deals a swift knock-out. Nothing could have been swifter than Williams's blow.

The fact that Shaylor fell from the forecastle-head was incidental. He would have been knocked to any deck.

Under any circumstances, that their sympathy should have been with Williams was unexpected. Rather I would have thought them ready to cheer if he had been bound to a mast and flayed.

For the second time that day Shaylor recovered consciousness on our deck and found himself bruised and nearly filled with salt water. Two or three buckets full were thrown over him, and he was then left alone, ignored. There was no time to nurse him. He was dead

for all that any one knew or tried to find out. Well, if he was, why waste time on him? If he wasn't he'd come around all right.

Many a man had died under a skipper's fist or boot in those seas, and whoever was curious enough to read the log found he had fallen from a yard-arm and broken his neck. True enough, a few hours before Williams had worked over his body intensely and apparently as hopelessly as a demon-caught soul weaving ropes of sand to climb from hell.

A few minutes later, ten or fifteen or somewhere around that, Shaylor came to. I was working with the mainsail, but I had kept a curious eye on him. It took him a moment or two to realize where he was: a second or so more to remember what had happened. The expression on his face was almost amusing.

I can't say that Williams noticed him. There was little that he did not notice, even when he wasn't looking. But I know that he spoke to the fellow who had just been relieved at the helm and was coming forward, and who stood behind Shaylor—at that moment sitting up—when he, Williams, said:

"Go on that boom and bear a hand."

Shaylor heard the command given to another man, and misunderstood. He answered, "Aye, aye, sir," struggled dizzily to his feet and went across the deck to work.

It was characteristic of Williams to ignore what had happened. I don't know what, if anything, he may afterward have said to Shaylor. He must have said something, for Shaylor and Raikes divided the authority of mate between them.

I suppose each thought himself second in command;

and neither was. There were no seconds in command, or thirds.

Shaylor asked me privately what Williams had hit him with.

"Do you really want to know?"

There was a touch of mystery in my tone.

He said that he did.

I whispered:

"His fist!"

It was Hawkins who estimated Shaylor as a bad one. The men forward, he confided with me, all said that Williams ought to have killed him. They couldn't understand his being given the deck.

"I've known 'em like him, Red-Top. They toady t' the skipper an' kick cabinboys overboard when nobody's lookin'. They carry a grudge same as you an' me carry a thirst. Never lose it. They got ever'thing that makes a fighter but the stuff that makes a licked man win.

"He's told Raikes he'd get 'im—get Williams. It's bad that woman's on board. Seen the way he looks at 'er? No?

"Me and Raikes *ain't* gettin' chummy. But"—— he raised a thick forefinger to the side of his head—"see them ears? See the size of 'em? Well? Them's ears! The Lord knowed what He was doin' when He put 'em there."

"Well?"

"An' I'm tellin' you that fellow'll make trouble. He's been talkin' with the fellows. Tryin' to find out how they like Williams."

"And?"

"They hate 'im, o' course. Why, Raulson cries on my shoulder ever' night, tellin' me about the money he's

makin' back in Turkee. But he has to quit tellin' me about his cookin' an' goin' into details. I'm hungry 'nough as it is——.

"Say, an' Davenant says good mornin' to me, same as if I was a duke or somethin'. I've never seen him speak to anybody but you an' that girl. 'Fraid he'll be contaminated, I s'pose."

I asked if Davenant had not talked with him. Hawkins said never but once. After the fight with Williams "he asked how I liked the weather an' looked at my nose. Oh, he did say he'd see to it 'at I had justice. W'at's that? *Justice?* I said:

" 'Thankee, sir. I'd sure like to 'ave some.'

"How'd that monkey-faced, double-coated blackbeard that moves like he was 'fraid he'd break somethin' goin' get justice out o' Hurricane Williams?"

The sentence was in one breath, and Hawkins puffed from the effort. A long pause. Then the point to the conversation came out as Hawkins started to waddle off.

"S'posin' you say somethin' to Williams about Shaylor. Won't you, Red-Top?"

The simple way out was to say that I would; though nothing that could be said by man or oracle would make Williams more strainedly alert, more constantly suspicious. I doubt if he really trusted me, who could probably have been urged into treachery, bought, if somebody had offered something I wanted; not mere money and trinkets. If somebody had offered me the chance to live under a coconut-tree near a rum mill, on an island where there were no mosquitoes or missionaries,—why, if a man is tempted beyond his strength should he be condemned for seeming weak?

But I was not tempted in the least to carry Haw-

kins's warning to Williams. He seemed to resent such tattling; perhaps in the same way that he would have resented it had I furtively, confidentially, whispered into his low-bent ear that I suspected the ocean of being salt.

Dula Davenant liked the deck. Davenant himself spent long hours of both night and day stretched on his bed in a kind of reptilian immobility; brooding, no doubt. Looking ahead to Dakaru and dreaming of a nabob's wealth.

She was on deck most of the time. Williams was too. Her eyes were never off him.

In the week that went by after the storm she got into the way of coming up near me if I chanced to be loafing or at the wheel. It must have been that she wanted to compensate me for the obvious dislike Shaylor began to show for me about the time he learned I was, or was considered, Williams's jackal.

He went out of his way to use his authority when he had the deck, or didn't have it. But I knew more about "soldiering" than any field-marshal; so that didn't worry me much. Shaylor's irrepressible wish to bear himself in upon her notice caused him to speak to me when she was standing near, and to do so in a way that would have made a less discreet man fight.

Since I am telling this story, probably I should arouse more respect for myself by telling how I made Mr. Shaylor back water, take in sail, put down his helm and go about. Probably it should make no difference that nothing of the kind happened. The nearest approach to it was late one quiet night, when by some lapse of attention on the part of the wind it got almost dead astern and whistled softly as a shy lover below a lattice window. I

don't know what Shaylor was doing. Probably he was up in the bows hobnobbing with the lookout. Anyway he came on to the poop and at once became filled with excitement.

I was sitting on the skylight, smoking. Dula was sitting beside me. The wheel was lashed. We were probably a point and a half off the course.

Before I knew that he really meant to touch me he had grabbed me by the neck and flung me to the deck. He rushed forward to kick me, and all the while he roared mightily, proclaiming to listeners on the stars—if there were any—that I was this, that and something else worthless to a ship.

But he did not kick me. Even a worm will turn though an elephant's hoof is coming down; and I had a gun under my shirt. Shaylor saw it. He could scarcely help but see it in the moonlight when it was jerked out and pointed at him.

I didn't shoot. I seldom do the things I should. Nor did Shaylor kick me. We both forgot the presence of a woman, and I used some highly colored words too. In a moment's pause, when each was taking a little breathing-time, he said:

" 'Fore I get through with you, you'll know I'm *Red* Shaylor!"

I went to the wheel and Dula went below. She had remained until the last word was spoken. There was no timid fleeing from curses and harsh voices in her. She heard it all, and saw.

I don't know what manner of women Shaylor had wooed and won in his life. Probably the kind that merge themselves into the shadows of piles on wharves and wait in darkness so men may not clearly see what

records have been etched into their faces. Anyway, he actually seemed to think that Dula was, if not impressed, certainly not repulsed by his outbursts.

And, if it was a thing to be thankful for, I have him to thank that she and I became rapidly something like friends. True enough there was already a ghostly secret between us, but it had not been of much influence.

Incidentally, Shaylor reached Williams's ear first with his complaint. Had he delayed twenty years, he would still have been first.

I knew better than to carry a grievance of the kind to Williams. One should have broken bones, or best of all a broken neck, if he expected Williams to show even a remote sympathy.

I don't know what happened, but I imagine that Williams listened to him, listened with back half-turned as if paying no attention, yet poised in a curious stoop-shoulder attitude with weight on one foot, ready to pivot and strike. It was a long, long time before he relaxed from that sort of pose when I talked with him alone. Treachery was something he expected and seemed to invite by a strained, but nevertheless deceiving, appearance of carelessness.

I haven't the faintest idea what reply he made to Shaylor. He never mentioned the incident to me, except so obliquely as to seem to have no connection with it.

"McGuire, why are you always around that woman?"

Women were all alike to him. He would trust no one of them to be undeceitful and worse, unless she were in a coffin with the lid screwed down. But then he knew the feel of a hangman's knot, and had had the trap give way

from under his feet, all because of the lies of a woman—a woman he had loved.

"This woman," I said, "keeps other people's secrets better than her own."

He looked inquiringly.

"I don't know why Davenant's bound Dakaru-ward. But some o' the things she's tried to keep from God, I know. A woman usually shows her worst side to Him—when she loves!"

Williams made an impatient gesture of disgust.

"Give me time, give me time, Skipper. Rome wasn't built out of strawless bricks. And they had lots to drink. She'll talk to me one of these lonesome nights if Red Shaylor doesn't put in his oar.

"He calls himself *Red* Shaylor. Do you catch that, Skipper? It isn't because of his hair. It isn't because of his face. Must be because of his hands.

"I'd guess he's knocked men to hell from other places than the rigging of a wrecked ship. A red-handed dog, and proud of it."

Williams said something that included "good sailor."

"Yes, and I'm a good shot with a revolver. Can hit anybody that gets close enough to kick me. Supposin' the Lord had made 'em big enough to do it—how would you like to be kicked? Well, my hide's just as tender as anybody's."

I was boasting, no doubt. A fellow often lets his tongue act valiant. I can ruthlessly, slap-slam-smash, kill mosquitoes and flies—but things that bleed? It makes me rather queasy at my stomach to think of that, though if events happen fast and my blood is warmed up I can make as much noise with a gun as anybody.

But I wasn't to make much with mine on the *Sally Martin.* That night, during the two or three minutes that I slept the sleep of the conscienceless, some one stole the gun, took it right out of my bed.

It isn't much trouble to work a schooner. Nothing like a square-rigger. There would have been plenty of time for everybody to loaf but in his boyhood Williams must have used one of those copy-books that require the young pupil to write down fifty times that "the devil finds work for idle hands."

And the men growled. Of course. Look out for sailors that don't curse skipper, sea, ship and selves.

The men did not talk with me; but Hawkins was one of them. They accepted him. He sang and told long monotonous yarns, and had that fine disregard for the truth that deceives no one, but interests all.

"I hope you give a cannibal indigestion!" he said to me when he discovered that he had been shifted to the helm when Red Shaylor had the deck. "All us fellows for'ard hate him—. No. This *Red* bloke. Williams don't fight with his jaw."

Probably because Williams wanted to make sure the course was held, he kept Hawkins and me alternating at the wheel, four hours on and four off, with an occasional lapse through the day when he was on deck himself. Then we had to work, always work. It was swab, scrub, worm and parcel, fling the log-chip, work at chafing-gear—and so prove to the forecastle that we weren't being petted. More of Williams's craziness.

Only he probably never thought of proving anything to the forecastle. He could find more to do on that boat

than any other brute of a captain would have discovered on a full-rigger.

Thrown with Raikes through the night hours, we talked a little. Only I never quite liked the light in that impudent solitary eye of his. Probably he did not like the dull stare of mine. But he talked.

Mid-watch at sea are the hours of confessional, of confidences. A little craft, winged with white, floats over the black waters that are fretted with evanescent fires like myriad gems sparkling and vanishing; and the ship groans and moans and creaks so that a fellow if he has imagination at all must talk a bit to take his mind off ghosts and things.

Raikes said he went to sea at twelve. At sixteen he was A. B. and had had two ribs broken and an arm cracked by a bo's'n. At seventeen an eye was gone. A mate had kicked him, after knocking him down. Probably because he wasn't a husky.

He never met the bo's'n again. But he supposed they found the mate's body in a back street at Melbourne. Fifteen years has passed, but he, Raikes, knew him.

"I laid f'r 'im. Don't the Bible say an eye for an eye? I'd gouged 'is eye out, but I heard somebody comin'. Hope they found 'im dead, the —— —— ——!"

Raikes had gone around the world. He was an inconscionable little ruffian. He was second mate once. Maulmain. Sold some stuff out of the cargo and got caught. Went to jail. Came out without papers. Laid for some other mate. Got him drunk. Stole his papers. Good joke.

Another of my periodical jumpy moods was settling down on me. Raikes's voice was better than silence. Anything would have been better than being alone, even

Shaylor's boastings. Someway, seamen are not ashamed of their crimes—if they are crimes.

At last Raikes asked what I had against him; asked it as a man does when he feels, or pretends to feel, regretful, as when it seems stupid for two people who might be friends to be at outs.

I mentioned that at Turkee he seemed to have guessed Douglas Moore was some one else. With scorn he denied all thought of having even thought to turn Williams up.

He was not so facile in denying that he had more or less joined with Davenant to do away with Williams. But not to kill him! No, no, no. How could I imagine such a thing? (As if anybody on board the *Sally Martin,* or on any other man's ship, could take Williams prisoner without killing him!)

Raikes cursed Davenant. With a sudden, confidential way, as if to surprise me into telling, he asked how in the world I had found out.

I stole an idea from Hawkins, and pointed to my ears. Then Raikes furtively warned me to warn Williams against Shaylor.

I suggested that he use his own legs and tongue. He had. Williams hadn't listened.

There never was such a man. Davenant was afraid of him. It seemed to impress Raikes as queer that Davenant should be afraid of anybody; but of course Williams was Williams.

I suggested that Raikes try telling Williams why we were headed Dakaru-ward. He whispered that he had done that too—only a few hours before. Williams had listened, said nothing, made no signs, no move, not a quiver even of interest, though Grahame of Dakaru was the father of Dula Davenant!

I made a sign, move and a quiver, almost a jump, and exclaimed:

"What!"

Raikes affirmed it.

"You mean this black siren is a sister to that yellow-haired girl!"

With that exasperating air of the man who knows, or thinks he knows, he shook his head. There was no white girl at Dakaru. He had never been there. But she was just a myth. The Davenants were after Grahame. He was rich.

That wasn't all. Did I know who Davenant was? No. He had a *title*.

He didn't know what title; but from under the bunk he had heard them talking about what if it should be learned in the colonies and at London that a man with his title was— Listen:

"That woman's goin' there to kill her own father!"

Hardened little water-rat that he was, there was horror in even his voice. My flesh was chilled as if, like some victim of cruel magic in the Arabian fables, I was being turned to stone. I shivered.

I said it was a lie. Not because I didn't believe it—but one has to say something. I wondered, was it the truth?

Hers was a cold, deadly, meditative purpose. The almost casual murder of Tom Gibson—how could that shake the foundations of a woman consecrated to the death of her own father? Ugh!

It was a warm, white night; but I was chilled. Something about the word Father makes the crime of the lifted hand monstrous.

But she did not seem monstrous to me. I felt that

she should. I was amazed at myself. I was horrified yet more than fascinated.

On paper crime is all one color, red and damned; and the one who is guilty—at a distance too remote for personality to be felt—seems a terrible, unhuman, monstrous creature. Laws, customs, ethics, tabus, ignore personality. Theory denies it any extenuation whatsoever. But justice, with its dry, rigid formalism, is itself inhuman.

Heaven forbid that I should offer a word in defense of Dula Davenant. I am defending myself, not her. Had that black coat with symbolic crimson plush lining fallen from her and disclosed a leprous breast, I would have gone as far on the bowsprit as the tips of my fingers could find an inch of wood to hold.

I did not flee from the murderess, the sworn parricide, the monstrous daughter, wicked, cruel woman, daughter of a devil. I may have thought of her with chilling blood, but when she stepped into sight all that I thought drifted away in a sort of vague mistiness.

And it must not be fancied she was an enchantress, or that any strange bewitching perfumes numbed the senses, or charms of face made her not as other women. She was different, but after all only in that way that any one striking woman differs from another.

At a glance I had recognized certain satanic cruelties in Dula Davenant, veiled by the mysteries that are feminine. I had in a way rather the inclination than the will to evade her. Men are moths, and moths the souls of dead men—women and candles are that much alike.

Raikes had slipped down into the waist of the ship. I was alone at two o'clock in the morning. I tried to jig

barefoot on the grating: my blood, icily, had stopped flowing.

I hummed aloud, and quit it abruptly.

I felt more like praying, but, not knowing how, I swore. Even the oaths came dully, sluggishly. There was no heart in them.

Under the high wind the schooner listed to starboard so that I did not dare lash the helm and go searching for something big enough to break the new lock on Williams's chest. Besides he was in his cabin. One footfall inside his door and he would be awake, even if he were asleep.

He kept a light burning all night. He was usually up two or three times, writing, reading, appearing on deck first at one place and then at another, vanishing silently —always barefooted. Not for stealth but because toes hold a deck better than cowhide.

Dula—Dula—Dula Davenant Grahame. Neither her name nor her face would get out of my head. It had no right to be there. I was less than the capstan to her. Put ears on the capstan, she would talk to it as well. I wished she would come on deck—I wished anybody, anything, would come on deck. Supposing some old shaggy sea-monster, with human voice and head, harkened to my wish and came chuckling over the taffrail? I turned my head quickly to make sure none was coming.

I have never got over the feeling that one should not be surprised if water-gnomes, and scaly people, draped with sea-weed, thrust themselves up out of the black water in the lonesome watch hours. A sea-maiden with black hair and eyes and long slim white arms—extended in languishing implorement. What sailor would hesitate? Perhaps those who are down in the log as suicides

have caught a glimpse of the siren face, heard the whisper of her song. The sibilant, slithering froth in the night is like the furtive hiss of strange women, mute but eager for attention; and what more than the phosphorescent fire-laced splotches of ruffled water is like the vanishing glitter of gold-scaled, jewel-studded draperies about the invisible forms of fair, soft, warm bodies?

I came out of my senseless reverie with a shiver. Had I heard a step on the companion stairs, and had I turned and caught the blur of a withdrawing head? Too much imagination? I watched. I listened.

Forward was the low mumble of voices, and now and then I could catch an accent. It was all very far away; no companionship in that. I *had* heard and I had *seen* something—somebody! Yes, but in moods like that I was always hearing and seeing things.

And were those things the less real because they did not exist? Ask the man who shrieks to see a blood-red elephant climb the wall. Drunkard, says the wise men. The terrible deliriums are those of silent, sober men with a score of wasted years, a cluster of heavy, withered, dry memories about their necks. Of these the wise and pious know nothing. They will learn of them in Heaven by asking:

"Who are those queer, rough-looking saints that stand in such high favor so near the Throne?"

Will come the answer then:

"Those are the first chosen of the earth, the men and women God so filled with passion, with courage, with wild wayward impulses, with all that makes life reckless, heedless, mad, sending them to far places and into fierce dangers, making them clamor the night out with drunken dancing and shrill, mirthless laughter, fill-

ing them with bitter hates and loves more bitter, so that they knew no ease, no peace, no rest, knew nothing of gentleness and quietude, and they suffered there on that old mud-ball of a world all that you good people, vainglorious and comfortable because your passions and impulses were less gripping and griping, must suffer in hell before you, too, can get up near the Throne!"

That was a shot! It came from the deck below.

The wheel, spinning, left my hands. The ship lurched madly before the wind. So suddenly released, with a crazy veer she half-spun, reeled, rocking, as if to capsize. Frantic calls came out of the waist as the men dashed to the sheets. But I was gone.

I flung myself down the companion and landed sprawlingly. Silence, and no one in sight; for a moment that stretched itself tenuously into a great length of time no one stirred. There was not a sound.

More dreams of open eyelids? More imagination! True, that shot had been muffled, but I had *heard* it. I knew that I had heard it.

Then I heard a heavy, strained half-grunt—but nothing of a groan in it.

I jumped to Williams's door, calling his name as I flung it open.

He was sitting on the edge of his bed, his body distorted in the effort to pass his left hand below his right shoulder. His face was tense and drawn, but the teeth were clenched. His eyes struck me as if some actual physical force streamed from them.

"In the back. Asleep. Don't know who," he said.

There was a little black spot with a trickling stream of red just below the right collar-bone; and it was pain-

ful. Sweat covered Williams's forehead, and it hurt to breathe.

I stood there in utter helplessness. I could do nothing. I knew nothing. I had no skill.

It was impossible to tell how badly he was hurt. For one thing, the bullet had not come through. For another Williams would not give whatever Furies harried him the satisfaction of seeing him wince.

He calmly tried to work his shoulder, felt about, pressed here and there, and except for the involuntary flinching that not even his will could check when he tried to breathe deeply, there was then little to show he had been wounded—but his lips were soon covered with blood.

Almost at once there was the high, excited babble of voices, the shoving, crowding, pressing of bodies. Everybody came. Word went over the ship rapidly.

I could not understand how I had been the first, how I had stood there so long, alone with him. It had not been long, and I must have come faster than I realized.

Besides, Dula Davenant, the only person aft that I really trusted—not so much at that moment as for what followed shortly—said that she had not been sure that it was a shot. Something had awakened her. She thought it was a shot, and listened.

She heard me come down; then it was quiet until I called Williams's name. She hastily flung her cape about her and came.

Williams tried to ignore her. She would not be ignored. He pushed her hands roughly away, and for one instant her eyes glittered; but I saw it was the glitter of resolution, not that of an offended woman.

I could write on and on forever and never put down

quite all that I saw and felt and thought in those few minutes, looking from her to Williams and back again. She was quiet, but uneasy; and, too, felt helpless, futile; but was determined not to be—though there was nothing in the world to be done.

She glanced at me half-imploringly, but at once saw that it was useless to expect anything of men. Her face contracted in a little spasm of pain, and she closed her eyes tightly, opening them at once as she bent over and saw the black hole and trickling blood on his bare sunburnt body.

In frank sympathy she stroked his shoulder, with strong, gentle pressure urging him to lie down. He motioned to push her away. She stepped aside—but not a toe's length farther from him.

He was making an effort to keep his head clear, but vertigo was striking. He tried to rise, and reeled unsteadily. It was not faintness. He was dizzy. She pushed him back, and being dizzy he yielded, slightly groping.

"A dirty coward—to shoot 'im in the back!" came Red Shaylor's loud voice.

"He's dyin'."

"No. Fainted."

"Fainted! See Hurricane Williams faint," a voice of scorn.

"Who's got whisky?"

"By the Lord God, he was a man!"

"Well, Mr. Shaylor, guess you're skipper now——."

"I guess he ain't!"

The voice was deep as thunder, slow, as Hawkins laying a pair of hands on two men in front of him, pulled them out of the way and, regardlessly, pressed Davenant

against the bulkhead. There was an immediate hush. Hawkins's tone implied more than he said, and the implication was understood clearly by every one—possibly except Shaylor.

"I guess you ain't—nor never will be captain o' this ship," said Hawkins, glaring at Shaylor. "You've said you'd get 'im, but there's us on here that'll get you, too."

Angry buzzing and mumbling followed.

"You mean I done that!" demanded Shaylor.

Williams turned restlessly. His eyes were shut and he shook his head as if to drive away dizziness.

"McGuire. Get them out. Get them out. Everybody."

"You mean I done that!" Shaylor cried again.

"Outside, all of you. Give way there. He needs air."

I tried to be authoritative.

Slowly, as if no one was willing to move first and all were eager to see the end of the quarrel, the men moved, stepping backward, necks stretched to have their eyes nearer the behemoths that threatened fight. Davenant pressed flat against the wall, still composed, looking blacker than ever—for he had not dressed but came in white silk—leaned out and stared at Shaylor with sternly curious eyes.

Williams lurched upright.

"Get out!" he said, and tried to rise to his feet.

They all gave way, but Shaylor had loosened a stream of curses. Davenant paused in the doorway. He was ready to speak to me, but I pressed my hand against him and closed the door.

Shaylor's voice continued to be heard. Hawkins rumbled—then they were fighting. The blows and

bumping of their bodies in the narrow passageway came to my ears much as if they had been two bulls fighting.

Williams was talking to me, or curiosity, if not anxious sympathy for Hawkins, would have caused me at least to open the door.

Williams, tortured and dizzy, straining himself to seem composed, lay on the bed, his eyes still closed. He did not know that Dula remained in the room, she stood so quietly.

"McGuire?"

"Yes, Skipper."

"Take her into Lelela." He was speaking of the ship. "Stores there. Mine. Under my bed—a case of rifles. Plungers in that chest."

Williams, lest a mutinous crew should get hold of the rifles, had removed the firing-pins. Then quietly:

"You can't trust anybody. I don't know about Hawkins. Maybe he's all right. Shaylor, Davenant, Raikes —watch them. And that woman. McGuire, that woman——"

There was a crash and shouts in the passageway—more than shouts; yells and a wild tumbling and clatter of blows.

"What are those fools doing?" he demanded.

Dula reached over and struck my arm, then motioned for me to get Williams to go on, finish what he had started to say of her.

My nerves were jangled. What could be going on out there? I had to see. I opened the door.

The rough breathing of men was the most vivid thing I noticed at first. It was as if a dozen wheezy bellows were puffing.

And Shaylor was cursing, his back to the bulkhead,

men to the right and left of him, battered men, bluffed men. Hawkins's big face was streaming blood; he had been whipped. Others of the crew had leaped to help him. Shaylor had beaten them.

Rough, noisy braggart that he was, he had right to the name of *Red* Shaylor. With his fists he had beaten them.

I have heard it told that boasters and bullies will not fight. Most of those I have chanced across would fight. As a lion beats its sides with its tail, they rouse themselves with their own tongues. But somehow something always seems lacking in them. Perhaps it is because they drive only with their fist, and have little or nothing of that dynamic force of personality, often stronger than blows. Just as at that instant a surprising thing happened.

"Now, you —— ——," Shaylor cried exulting, "who's runnin' this ship?"

Williams was out of the bed, on his feet; he lurched to the door; he was unsteady, but his eyes were open. An abrupt short gesture with his right hand, and:

"On deck! Get there!"

He stood, grim and tense, blood on his mouth, giving the impression of crouching without doing so, as if ready to leap. The men hesitated awkwardly, then began to go up the companion stairs.

Not till the last man had foot on the stairs did he move; then, half-turning, reeled, fumbled blindly with hands to face, and fell. Hurricane Williams had fainted.

CHAPTER IX

TRADITIONS OUT OF SICILY

THERE are many things that should be told at once—that should be told not in sequence, but simultaneously. For instance, there was another fight on deck about two minutes after the men had gone up and found the ship aback in the wind, rolling and drifting like a crewless craft.

Shaylor jerked out a belaying-pin and started to give orders. Hawkins jerked out another and told him to go to the devil. I had the story from Raulson.

Hawkins was bleeding and battered, but he avowed that he was not beaten. He rushed in and was laid unconscious. The men took orders from Shaylor.

For another thing, Davenant sidled up to me as I came out of Williams's room, his white teeth showing in a hateful smile, and whispered low.

"Luck has been with us, eh?"

Some time had passed in that cabin before Davenant met me, and among other things during that time I had unlocked the chest—of course, to make sure the rifle-plungers were safe—and emptied a bottle of gin down my own throat, all except a sip that Dula had taken from a cup that I offered her. She had tried in a not unskilful way to wipe and dress the wound. The girl was tired and worn, and more pale than I had seen her. And more resolute.

I probably smiled at him, for I was past caring what he thought or did. Luck? Luck? I played with the word. Indeed, for sooner or later we'd drift or be blown to some island where there were natives; and wherever there were natives Williams was known; and when they found him dead, or half-dead:

"How would you like to see *your* head drying on the rafters of a chief's hut!"

I left him.

Davenant probably suspected that I was drunk, but he had something to brood over anyway. He should have known enough of human nature to be aware that no man is to be trusted; so he really had no reason to be surprised at me when he came whispering about "luck" through those shining teeth.

I found Hawkins, a great red gash on his head as if he had been half-scalped, on the forecastle-head. His face was scarcely recognizable.

He began by cursing me for a coward, a hanger-back and named all the other men for the same. By his side he had an ax.

Shaylor could shout his own throat out. He wouldn't budge. Let Shaylor come forward for him and there would be another fight.

I mentioned significantly that somebody had stolen my gun. Hawkins vowed he did not care how many guns Shaylor might have stolen.

He looked longingly at the big revolver of Williams's that I had put on. He damned me for not using it—then suddenly he cursed Williams for pulling the fellow out of the sea. Let him have the gun; he would go aft then and there—

I had a bottle behind my back. We drank it. And talked.

No—Shaylor would not get to the bottles in the chest. Dula Davenant was there. She was keeping vigil —had he ever seen such a woman?

No, of course not. Worse than any ever seen. Of course.

Peculiar, strange, fierce, dangerous. But then all women were dangerous. There was no distinction. Aye, and she hated Shaylor.

Hawkins said the crew did, every man.

Except Davenant?

Maybe not Davenant, but what of it? Wait till night, Hawkins went on, and Shaylor would learn something. All the men hated him—. If I would bring up another bottle he would take his ax and go aft. He had a mind to go after another bottle himself.

I warningly shook my head.

Dula was keeping vigil with a naked knife on the table beside her. There was no knowing who had fired into his back. She would trust no one. Me? Yes, but no one else.

She had begged could I—could I possibly imagine what Williams was about to say of her—of "that woman"—when he had been diverted? I could. But I lied. I knew how very much she resembled another woman, one whom Williams could not forget.

It is better to hate than to love. I did not tell her so. No doubt she already knew; and knew, too, how uncontrollable love is, even when consciously futile.

Hawkins was talking. He did not know, he said, what had got into him. He was a peaceable man. But

the ship, the ocean, the world, wasn't big enough for him and Red Shaylor.

He had had fights—a few. But he never felt that way toward any other man, except one. Carp Taylor. Taylor's ship, he said, looked as if it had been hit by a typhoon before the crew got him, Hawkins, across the main-hatch. Afterward he had tried four times to kill Taylor. Twice he thought he had succeeded. He hated him worse than Shaylor. No, he wouldn't hit Shaylor from a shadow. But give him that gun and he would take a shot or two at Shaylor there on the poop just to see him jump.

Shaylor walked back and forth on the poop. That was his domain. In full view, Hawkins and I sat and drank. The men below in the waist stared first one way and then the other, mumbling together, shaking and nodding heads gravely, depressed, afraid of they scarcely knew what.

In a way, perhaps, they had come to regard Williams as one who in spite of his abrupt violence and harshness had other qualities than a tigerish strength that evoked respect. He filled the ship. There was no hesitancy about him; and there was a sense of definite security—something definitely dependable—in him.

One simply could not imagine a mutineer with an ax holding his forecastle and keeping men away from the jib. They were literally at sea; they felt figuratively so.

Shaylor called them aft and tried to win them, tried to explain. He was, in a way, plausible; even right. Somebody had to be captain. They had to make port. They were all pressed men.

Then too there would be the reward. They would share that.

The first thing to do was to rush the forecastle-head and take care of the two fools up there. Heads twisted soberly over shoulders in our direction.

It may have been they caught a whiff of the liquor; or it may have been that they did not know what they wanted; whether to go to a white man's port with Shaylor who might break their heads if they refused, or to join Hawkins on the forecastle.

Men are much like domesticated animals. They may not like to be herded, but they are much at a loss to know what to do without herding. Though, on the other hand, there is a perceptible lure in being rebellious. Even in rebellion, mutiny, outlawry, they want a herder.

"What we goin' do?" Hawkins asked, tired of trying to listen to what Red Shaylor was saying to the men. There was very little interest in the question. He did not greatly care. The brandy had been strong, and enough of it to warm his big body.

I did not know. Williams wanted to get to Savaii—to the village of Lelela. He had friends and stores there.

No, Williams wouldn't die. The only way a man like that died was suddenly.

Give him a chance to keep his finger-tips on his soul and he would wrest it out of Death's hands. It had to be snatched from his body all at once, by surprise.

Hawkins showed honest amazement. He thought Williams was dead, or the same thing, as good as dead. Ho, that made a difference. It was probably the brandy that made the difference.

He had a mind to go run Shaylor off the ship, to make him jump into the ocean and drown. Hawkins assured me that I was a fine fellow. He loved me. Let's go chase Shaylor.

The men were leaving the poop, straggling off. Whatever they had decided, they had not done so with enthusiasm. Perhaps they had decided nothing.

"Hey, you cookee," Hawkins bellowed at Raulson. "Bring us some dinner."

Only he put an assortment of lurid oaths into the order; but somehow they were not offensive even to Raulson. There is a subtlety in cursing that evades any effort to get it down on paper because it belongs entirely to the tone and in some very nearly impalpable way to the intention behind the tone.

Shaylor quickly commanded Raulson not to give us food until he gave permission. Hawkins bellowed that he would shave Raulson's ears off if he didn't send up a full kid. Shaylor bellowed back that he would brain Raulson if he did. Raikes's head appeared at the top of the forecastle ladder.

"Get down, you one-eyed shrimp!" Hawkins roared, waving his ax, but not going to the trouble of standing.

Despite his warlike tongue Hawkins was very nearly in a merry mood. What was a battered face and aching body? All in the day's hazard.

Raikes came on. He was with us. He hoped Shaylor would die of various foul diseases and be eaten by a shark, then get himself toasted on the devil's tail as long as there was a coal left. Raikes did not want to go to Sydney. Shaylor did.

Raikes explained that some of the old heads advised standing by Shaylor. What was there in it for them to go on with the *Sally Martin?* They might all be hanged.

Then there was the reward, and probably salvage on the ship. He denounced them all. He wouldn't have anything to do with such a lot of dogs.

Hawkins, a little unsteadily, thickly, praised Raikes. Patted his head.

"'Ave a drink, old mate," and gave him the nearly emptied bottle.

Raikes drained it. Hawkins clamored for his dinner, tried to sing a little, roared at Shaylor, dared everybody to come up and get him, nearly struck my foot in sinking the blade of the ax into the deck to show how he could split the first adventurous head that came up the ladder; and requested Shaylor to put his up first

Now and then his head would nod a little, and be jerked up; then Hawkins would look quickly about him, see all was well, remember his empty belly, or forget the words of some song he would try to get out.

I did not know what to do. Not even the good magic jinnee that dwell in gin and brandy bottles could chase away the black melancholic devils that sat nipping at my heart.

I was helpless, felt even more helpless than possibly I was. I could not take bearings or set a course. I knew no more of laying a course than a grocer's apprentice. I could follow one after a fashion, but I could not take bearings.

Raikes could not either. He admitted it. Said something about "dead reckoning," but I would rather have trusted the wind and tide than his calculations. We had both lied to Davenant when we told him we knew nautical mathematics.

Shaylor could navigate all right, but he couldn't find his bearings without instruments. And he had no chance to get to them. Dula had the door locked. She would give up nothing. Davenant himself had asked to get in, and been refused.

We had talked, Dula and I. The sense of intimacy had suddenly become close, but there were still curtains between us, or rather before her. Williams slept feverishly, or he may not have slept at all. He had opened his eyes from time to time and looked at us, looked hard, with something of a startled expression, at her. He coughed—blood. The crude dressings she had put on the wounds gave him little comfort.

Among the things she had said at that time, whispering with watchful glances to make sure that even low tones were not disturbing, was:

"He is so unlike the men I have known. I was never the least afraid of him."

It was such an odd thing to say—for her who seemed to me to have no fear at all, to say. I asked the most natural question, and gravely she replied:

"Yes, I was a little afraid of you. No. I am not now. Why? I can't say. You have changed. Haven't you?"

Had I? I wasn't then drunk enough to tell her that —that—that—. But tell her what? How was I to tell her anything? Particularly something I had not then admitted to myself.

I asked what she meant to do.

She meant to stay by the bedside and watch over the wounded man. That was her immediate and impersonal answer. It was as if she meant for me to understand that she would stay by any bed that had a wounded man in it.

"You love him."

It was a thought that slipped out aloud.

Her face flushed—her eyes blazed. The strong little

chin went up, and she pressed her lips nervously. As usual when I told the truth I was into trouble.

But it seemed to me that in spite of her determined pose she was all aflutter. Deeper waves of red surged into her pale cheeks. Her tense, slim hands motioned out at me fiercely. She was aroused, but even then she whispered.

Love? She hated the word! She hated every man that ever used it. It was a mockery, that word.

Then with a quick change of manner, almost coaxingly, she asked why I had said such a thing. And waited, suspended in a kind of eagerness, as if my answer would be important.

"I am drunk," I had told her.

And, snatching up a bottle of brandy, I had gone out and found Hawkins on the forecastle.

I had left him there, half-dozing. Raikes said he would play sentinel. I passed the men, edging away to avoid them. As I went by they followed me with their eyes, said nothing.

Shaylor and Davenant were sitting on the skylight. I heard the word "Dakaru" before they saw me. Shaylor got up truculently. Davenant asked me to come there.

I kept at a distance. My fingers fumbled with the handle of a big revolver. Shaylor tried not to appear unamiable. But the very curves of his body were threatening.

We had an old grudge anyway; and I did not know then that when he had knocked on the door, Dula had said she would not open it—not to anybody except "Mr. McGuire." Mr. Red Shaylor would have liked to break the neck of Mr. McGuire.

I shall say for him that he was no good as a hypocrite.

Not at all in the same rank with Davenant, who, had he never learned that a smile is supposed to inspire confidence, would have been more convincing.

They wanted me to bring out what Davenant called the "instruments of navigation." I told them they did not need a sextant to find the way to hell.

They guessed that I had been drinking. Shaylor seemed the more interested in the possibility of my having left a little something.

He tried to explain. He was sorry Williams had been shot. If he knew who had done it, he would hang the fellow astern by the neck.

I suggested that nobody would stop him from suicide. He swore at me, and seemed about to rush. He withheld himself, and inquired if I was crazy.

Davenant asked me to remember certain conversations with himself. I had a defective memory, regrettably so.

It came to nothing, all that talk.

I backed down the companion, painfully conscious that there was no courage in me. Someway I couldn't act with resolution. Too much given to words, I suppose.

There aren't many people in the world who know what it is to feel themselves cowards. It is always easy to delude one's self. I had always been able to do it before; to plead discretion or indifference, or the intention of using some subtle, roundabout means of evening the score.

I was gifted in the making of impertinent replies; also thought that I was wily in laying plots and traps. Every man succeeds in being a hero to himself. At that moment I had nothing inside of me but ruins.

"Who is it?" Dula asked as I tapped lightly on the door.

There was nothing soft and feminine about her voice, nothing tremulous—no fear in it. I told her. The bolt slipped back. The door opened an inch, scarcely more, as she peered out. And she had a gun in her hand.

"Mine!" I exclaimed in a breathless gasp.

A trace of misgiving flickered across her face, and was gone. But a shadow, nothing more, remained for a moment or two in her manner. She had stolen it from me while I was asleep.

Her explanation was naive; at once convincing and humiliating. I had not used it that night when Red Shaylor flung me to the deck. She would use it if—well, if he ever put his hands on her.

Probably she had reasoned, if a woman does ever reason after she has an idea, that he could not stop a bullet as he might grasp her wrist and stop a knife-thrust.

"Then Davenant shot him!" I cried, excited, pointing to Williams.

He had lapsed into unconsciousness, and was scarcely breathing.

For an instant she stared at me, then sighed heavily, dropping her arms. Her body relaxed in a kind of hopeless depression. She half-fell, wearily, against the door.

"I might have known. I *might* have known," she said in a low, tired voice.

Then, straightening up, her tone growing firmer and rapidly merging into fierceness, her bright black eyes narrowing and glittering until she was strained, panting and furious:

"I might have *known!* He isn't the first Lord Davenant has shot in the back. How I hate him and have

hated him! His heart is as black as his face, Oh, I have done his crimes for him till I—till I—I——

"Do you know why we are going to Dakaru? I am going there to kill my own father; then I'll use the same knife to cut into the heart of Francisco Davenant!"

I could not help it; I shrank back against the bulkhead, horror in my eyes. I knew it was there. I felt it. She did not notice. I was half-drunk, yet I was appalled.

The walled-up passion within her had burst. There was no reticence, no shame, no hesitancy. I had known she would be terrible in anger, but it had been impossible to dream of anything like this.

It was bewildering, frightening; in spite of the utter ferocity of her words there was no hysteria in her manner or voice. She was not a woman suddenly unbalanced, but was speaking from the secret depths within her. It is unlikely that she realized what she was saying, though she was saying what she had long brooded over, bitterly, malignantly; and it may be true that she was mad. She did not seem so, however much her words may.

Hers was a vengeance nurtured from early girlhood. Her Sicilian family was noble and barbaric. It had a tradition from old time of never forgetting an injury and of never going into a court for its revenge.

She was proud of that. She scorned the English who gave their wrongs and stained honors to be washed out by lawyers. Her two immediate male ancestors had been English, but she felt that none of their blood was in her.

That amazing young Sicilian countess who, shortly after the Napoleonic wars, came into England the bride of a marquis's son had handed down her traditions and her blood. With her own slim hand and the knife that

Dula thrust toward me, she had poniarded a young gallant who had foolishly thought she was, except for her beauty, much like other women.

All London was horrified, though the matter was hushed and the young gallant, much wiser for his loss of blood, was bundled off to the Alps to recover. The marquis's son, pulled on by his shocked family, set about a divorce; but his wife, Dula's amazing grandmother, told him:

"You drag me into your stupid courts, you take your name away from my children—and what do you think I will do? Shut myself up in a tower room and weep? No. No. Before my two brothers can come out of the south, each with an oath on his knife, you will be dead."

There was no divorce. Not even after the marquis's son returned from his long travels to assume his father's title. The proud, fiery countess retired into the country with her children, and they were brought up Sicilians; brought up to hate their father, scorn the English forms of justice and the mild, easy honor that did not use blood to wash out insult and injury.

In time Dula's mother met, loved and eloped with a handsome young cavalry officer. The brother, Francis Davenant, baptised Francisco, went after them. The new bride had in her the same blood as her brother, and Captain Grahame does not seem to have been timid—though Dula gave him not even that meager credit.

Her mother loved the captain, and would not leave him. Love is more than family, more than tradition, blood, honor—more even than Sicilian vengeance! Back they went, Lord Davenant, Captain Grahame and his bride to face the fiery old countess—then a marchioness,

also—who seems to have been as warm-hearted as she was terrible.

Captain Grahame came from a good family; he avowed his love, promised his watchful devotion; and appears to have been not a little impressed. The countess settled a sum of money on her daughter and gave them a warning along with her blessing.

A year later Captain Grahame was like all other men; drinking, gambling, embittered. Two years later he was out of the army. Dula said thrown out, disgraced. And when Dula was five years old, she was taken to her aging grandmother's—her father gone, her mother dead. He had run away with an Englishwoman, a cousin, and had gone too far to be found.

The mother—with that same knife that Dula shook glitteringly before my alarmed eyes—had stabbed herself and died. Perhaps less from shame than through the hope that her wronged spirit might better seek out and harry the man who had so disgraced her.

Not in five hundred years, not since her Sicilian family remembered its name, had there been a divorced or a deserted woman. Some of its daughters had, when married to worthy men, been killed by their wronged husbands. The old countess had impressed upon Dula that that was a death of dignity and justice.

"A woman," she had said, "woos death when she embraces her husband's friend, and if she smiles under the knife the Mother of God weeps in pity!"

With the death of her grandmother Dula had come directly under the care of Davenant. He was very much dreaded and disliked by many people, and there was a strong cynical hatred in him for everybody. Yet he had a large acquaintance, as a man does who uses up

money rapidly; and he must not have been scrupulous as to how he got more.

"He hesitates at nothing and pushed me into everything," she said. "Oh, what I endured—and learned!"

Her enraged confessional did not cover that period at all; except in so far as I understood, by inference, that it was one of glittering evilness, with no fear of God and no love of anybody.

"I loathe men!" she hissed, glaring at me, her little fists clenched as if she would like to wreak on some man the rage she felt toward all.

She had never been permitted to forget her father. As a child Davenant had made her kiss the knife with which she was one day to kill Grahame.

It was known that he had gone into the South Seas. But one doesn't follow a man by the track his ship leaves in the water. There was, she said, a Sicilian proverb to the effect that if your hate endured the world would shrink to bring the breast of your enemy within arm's reach. Davenant, cold, implacable, watched, waited and gave her no chance, even if she had used it, to forget.

It was through watching for all reports out of the South Seas that she had heard and learned of Hurricane Williams. Oddly enough, what most strongly appealed to her at first was the legend that he was a renegade, hating the men of his blood; and when some imaginative writer, with a basis of fact, described how Williams was so embittered against women that he would avert his face to avoid seeing them, she realized a sudden, sympathetic kinship.

Then, too, he seemed such a man! His exploits, none the less glamourous for being recounted over and over from mouth to mouth and finally done into articles,

excited her imagination. Like most people who never saw him, she pictured him as a massive, giant-like man. It was the more amazing to her, and not disappointing, to discover that he was not a huge brute, and that his face, with features not even winds and sun and blows had blurred, was cleanly molded, refined.

For years Hurricane Williams had been more than a name to her. She had not, perhaps, idealized him, for she gloated over the stories of his ferocity—mostly false—his ruses, scarcely exaggerated, and his daring.

Her life at that time must have been passed in a kind of brilliant wickedness; embittered, restless, heartless, yet fluttering through nights of cold, glittering gaiety, hating men she lied to lovingly, and despising the women she knew. Hers was the blood of the remarkable old countess, but hers was not the irreproachable dignity of that famous grandmother.

"I wouldn't have known what to do with a rosary," said Dula. "I never prayed except that men told the truth when they cried I was ruining their lives!"

Her fierceness in recital was inexhaustible. She gesticulated passionately, and, having so surprisingly begun her confessional, hesitated at nothing. I was the weary one. My body was, but not my ears. They gaped in nervous eagerness to catch every word. Again and again I did not believe it—that she was talking to me. Each time I realized with a faintly palpable shock that it was real, that this woman was telling me her bitter, tragic, quivering story.

She had an unaccountable assurance that some day she and Hurricane Williams would not be strangers. She felt it. She had never felt anything more strongly,

not even that some time she would hear where Grahame was and find him.

Only in that one appalling sentence had she said "Father." He was Grahame to her. With a kind of ghastly diabolism, educed by Davenant, she was from girlhood consecrated to kill him. The naked knife-blade had not been kissed in vain.

At last rumor of him reached Davenant. A solicitor, who had disentangled the nearly exhausted properties of wife and husband when Grahame fled with a cousin for a bride, told Davenant he had been heard from.

Inquiry, investigation, followed. Reports of enormous wealth came back, and a kind of imperial splendor on a remote, wealthy island.

Davenant had got in touch with a sea-captain who knew Grahame, who had been to Dakaru, and who gave him the location of the island. A fellow named Taylor.

She and Davenant came to Melbourne. They were to have met Taylor there. But nothing was known of him; nothing could be heard of him. So Davenant made such arrangements as he could to reach Dakaru.

That was her story, the whole of it; except that when she had finished, tired, almost exhausted, by such protracted intensity, she turned and stooped over the unconscious body of Williams, wiping his lips. He was alarmingly motionless, and only a low sound of pain—sounds that could be wrenched from him only when he was unconscious—now and then showed that he was not dead.

She turned about and looked at me, then as if to make her confessional utterly full, said, low-voiced but fiercely:

"I would rather be under his feet than in the arms of any other man that ever lived. You guessed that, but

it isn't love—it is real. I don't know what it is and I don't care as long as it isn't called that miserable, foolish thing, love! Now be like all other men I have known and carry what I have said to Francisco Davenant—I'll kill you too!"

CHAPTER X

A DRUNKEN NIGHT AND AT DAWN A FIGHT

IF ONE did not have to eat or think this would not be such a bad world. I have had to do a little of both at times. Good, or even bad, gin will take the place of food if one can get roundly, soundly drunk. But each man has his failing, his weakness, and on that day mine was an invincible sobriety. My knees may have been a little disjointed, my fingers fumbling, my toes numb and sleepy; but that did me no good.

It was not only that I had listened hour on hour to Dula Davenant, and learned some of the things that God alone knew and that I sat another hour on hour looking at her, wondering why she did not appear as wicked, as evil, as terrible, as she was. She might take on that appearance if I shared my secrets with her.

I never would. I would have told her I loved her before I would have admitted that it was due to me that Williams was wounded.

Davenant had shot him because by stupid design I had pretended to have no loyalty to Williams, and also pretended to know how to navigate. Davenant had taken the shortest means of getting him out of the way. I knew it was Davenant because there had been but three revolvers on the ship. I had one. Williams had another. Davenant had pushed back his coat and shown me the third one time in talking of Grahame of Dakaru.

I had supposed Shaylor had taken my gun and hid or flung it overboard to evade detection. Brains are fine, fine things for those who know how to use them. I had been no better than an idiot.

But that did not keep me from getting hungry along late in the afternoon of that longest of earth's days. We could not stay penned up in that narrow cabin—at least I couldn't—without something to eat.

I remembered Hawkins's clamorous cries for food, and I ventured forth. I should do some clamoring too. I almost had the hope that Shaylor would get in my way.

After listening two hours to Dula, I was—or for a time felt that I was—a changed man. I rather thought that I hoped Davenant would shoot at me; and, of course, miss. That would make me justly angry, and I would shoot, too; and, of course, not miss. Perhaps he never shot except from the rear.

That thought made me a little uneasy. I had only two eyes, but I made an effort to look in all directions. I became very stealthy, or tried to become velvet-footed as a watchful cat. But it was probably more as if I was walking on club-feet.

I poked my head out of the companion and warily as a turtle looked about. The poop was deserted. Even the wheel was lashed. We were sailing almost straight for the setting sun. That was wrong.

Williams had said go to Savaii. Shaylor probably thought that he could bump into the mainland. He and Davenant were going back to get rid of Williams, get refitted and go to Dakaru. Of course, I guessed, that was what they were up to.

Let 'em pray for cloudless days and night, then. I smashed the binnacle with the butt of my revolver and

broke off the compass needle. For once in my life I acted without thinking.

Again, impulsively, I threw off the lashing. The ship was close-hauled, and would come around into the wind in a minute. We might not get to Savaii, but at least we would stop going in the wrong direction.

So it was that before I realized what I was doing I had, so to speak, declared war. It is always easy to declare war. Of course it had been foolish to destroy the binnacle if I was about to declare war; but I did not realize then that it was war. That had been the act of declaration.

I probably intended to smash it and run. But having smashed it I threw off the lashing. By that time I didn't feel like running. So it is that little things lead to greater. I was getting warmed up nicely.

The men were clustered forward in the waist. Shaylor was there, and Davenant. Shaylor turned with a yell and came bounding. I didn't know what he had been doing. I supposed urging the men to rush Hawkins on the forecastle, though I hadn't then noticed him, or rather noticed missing him.

Shaylor came, cursing. Others followed him, but they did not curse. He stopped half-way up the starboard ladder. I asked him to stop. In fact the bullet whizzed rather close to his head and made everybody duck.

I had had no intention of shooting. The crazy ship had come aback and was rolling drunkenly; so that may have made him think that I was half—or more—drunk, and didn't know what I was doing. Well, I really didn't.

He backed down that ladder in a hurry. Having got into such a muddle, I served notice to all the world that

I would shoot the first man that tried to come up either that or the port ladder.

Shaylor wanted to argue, but he used too many swear-words. They offended me. He was not fit to talk with a gentleman. I do not remember distinctly, but I would guess that I told him that, too.

Davenant tried to talk to me, but all I could wonder about was whether or not he would try to use his gun. Quite frankly, but perhaps with a little unsteadiness of tongue, I said I thought I would have to shoot him.

Perhaps I should have shot him, then and there. But I didn't. I preferred to talk about it.

One of my curses, and I have been subjected to many, is my weakness for talking. Williams was a silent man. His energy went to his fists.

However, Davenant did not know whether or not I would shoot. A man that wabbles from ankles to wrists is likely to do anything. But the rolling of that beastly schooner, with her sails aback, really did have something to do with my wabbling.

Davenant had come close to talk to me. Perhaps he blanched under his black whiskers. I distinctly had the wish to cut them off and see.

He asked if I would shoot an unarmed man. I told him those were the safest kind to shoot. I pointed the gun at him. It unsteadily swerved and veered around until I had about every other man there ducking and sidestepping anxiously, but it really was Davenant I was aiming at.

He knew it, too. In fact, he obeyed my instructions not to move. He was right at the foot of the ladder, and there was probably more danger of my falling down on top of him than of hitting if I shot.

But he was impressed, anyway. He insisted that he was unarmed. I told him to turn around and lift his coat tails. He did.

"Higher. Way up," I said, peering down.

Then I realized that my eyes were a little blurred, that things I looked at intently would not be still and had a tendency to duplicate themselves—to show two where there should have been but one. My eyes got that way once in a while, which was annoying.

However, if I had seen two gun-butts in his pocket I would have shot. But I couldn't see any. Which was in a way disappointing as well as reassuring. I rather wanted to shoot him.

Anyway, I shot at the deck. Each fellow must have thought I was shooting at him. They all jumped and ducked and tried to dodge out of sight.

It was very funny. I enjoyed it so much that I shot again. Davenant was the only one who stood still. Shaylor had darted in under the ladder. I stooped over, poked the gun between the steps and made him come out.

Then I shouted for Hawkins. No answer. I yelled loudly, and paused. No answer.

I yelled for Raikes. His little furtive form emerged cautiously from behind the mainmast.

"Do you want me t' come up 'ere?" he called.

I said I most certainly did; and where was Hawkins?

"I'll tell you 'bout it—all 'bout it," he said, running to the ladder.

"Look hout f'r 'im, McGuire," a voice 'way forward yelled. " 'E betr'yed 'Awkins!"

Oh-ho-ho! I understood in a flash. Raikes could

go neither up nor down, but half-way on the ladder he cringed. I leaned forward to jab the gun-muzzle into his rib, but nearly fell, so I contented myself with weaving it about in the general direction of his stomach.

"Let me explain!" he wailed.

I told him that in two minutes he would be telling his story to the devil, so he might as well rehearse. He began to talk, but I shut him up to ask if he could pray, and insisted upon hearing him. He started to pray, but it didn't suit me. He was too sincere.

"So you killed Hawkins!" I cried at him.

He protested wildly that he had not. He had saved Hawkins. Hawkins was not dead. He was down in the forecastle.

Shaylor would have waited till Hawkins fell asleep and pounced him. Raikes removed the ax so there wouldn't be any bloody work done, and no reason for killing Hawkins. So help him God, he was telling the truth!

"Dyrty little ly-ar!" yelled the cockney voice from up forward.

Raikes went on: When Hawkins slept and the ax was out of reach, Shaylor and three men had gone up and overpowered him. They got him down, and a fight set in that had very nearly jarred the timbers loose.

They tried to tie him up, but Hawkins had broken away, plunged into the forecastle, shut the door, ripped a planking from a bunk and was there daring anybody to come and get him. He had been threatening to set the ship on fire if food wasn't passed to him, but nobody dared take it. Raikes said that Shaylor had promised not to kill Hawkins if he, Raikes, would get the ax away from him.

I looked down to ask Shaylor if that was true. He was gone. But Davenant remained by the rail. It was growing a little dusky, and the darkness was sifting down over the ship like a faint cloud of fine dust. Davenant denied knowing anything about the matter.

Perhaps Raikes had not lied. He swore by all the oaths I submitted to him that he had not. I made him swear by everything from his grandmother's grave to the Bible, of which he knew nothing, that he had told the truth.

I shouted for somebody to let Hawkins out. But it was not a question of letting him out. He wouldn't let anybody in. Raulson, who was more or less of a friend anyway, ventured to offer Hawkins some food to get him to open the door a bit.

Shaylor had lapsed inconspicuously into silence and remained out of sight. Probably he sensed, thick-skinned though he was, the growing dislike of the crew for him and did not dare try to make trouble then, for there was no concealing the sentiment of the men.

More or less protected by the shadows of the coming night, some of them began to say jeering things, and mock the "Red" part of his name. The victor always has applause. The beaten man is jeered by those that quaked an hour before.

Then came out of the darkness forward:

"Ahoy, Red-Top!"

That big, roaring, hearty voice filled the air.

"Come on aft, Ben. I'm in control o' the ship. An' got a dozen bottles waiting to have their necks broke!"

But at that moment I nearly broke my own neck, and also nearly jumped over the side. A gun was fired almost directly behind me, and simultaneously a heavy form

either fell or leaped down the port ladder. Hawkins roared to know what was all that shooting row.

I had some moments of suspended animation right then and there. My heart stopped beating, my breath stopped, my wabbly body stiffened in cold fright. I know only too poignantly that I am not made out of the stuff of heroes; but had there been any heroes in my place they would have been scared too.

It was fortunate that I was not sober. I never would have recovered. As it was, it took hours of steady drinking to quiet my nerves.

Dula had heard the shots I had previously fired. She had come out anxiously, and paused, listening, out of sight, at the companion entrance. She had remained there for some minutes, with rising respect for what she mistook to be my bravery and daring.

As I talked with Raikes, I had ignored the port ladder. In the dusk, Shaylor had tried to slip up so as to sneak across the deck and get at me from behind. Dula had seen, recognized him, shot—and missed. But in one bound Shaylor had leaped to the deck below.

I have no zest in telling what happened that night. At dawn, for one of the few times in my ragged life, I was ashamed. For the only time in my life I vowed not to take another drink—and kept the vow for a little while.

Vows and pledges are foolish things. Some people might as well sign a pledge not to jump for the moon as not to reach for a bottle. I could have sworn faithfully to leave the moon alone. But some might as well sign a pledge not to take a breath as to turn their mouths aside when the stinging, thrilling, fiery, deifying, glass lips

are offered them. And what to me is mere breath beside the siren kiss of hot liquor?

Hawkins came aft. Harmodius and Aristogiton—whoever those fellows were—never exchanged such greetings on the gallows as we exchanged on the poop. He waddled up the ladder, waving his plank like a broadsword and bestowing his defiance upon all the world, sun, moon, stars—and Shaylor.

I welcomed him with arms wide-spread. He looked me over carefully, appraisingly, and by the interposed plank held me at a distance until he had inquired as to what was left to quench his thirst. Then I became a dear friend and was nearly smothered.

He reminded me that certain tinned stuff was stowed in the pantry aft—to keep it from being looted. I fished the key from Williams's pocket.

Williams lay very still. His breathing had become stertorous. He had, Dula said, opened his eyes frequently—also asked for water. He was matter-of-fact about it. Once he had started to make some kind of remark, such as—she thought—"Why are you here?" but he had stopped, and closed his eyes.

She could not tell whether he slept or not. He bled much. She watched to wipe the blood away from his mouth.

Hawkins and I held high revel. We placed a lantern at the head of each ladder so nobody could slip up on us. He gave up his plank for Davenant's revolver, which was found in his room.

Where the chill, dignified, frigid-eyed Davenant spent the night I do not know, and I was not in a mood to care.

Hawkins must need shoot the revolver two or three

times to see if it worked, and I, not to be outdone, shot into the black water two or three more than he. We ate and drank and talked very loud.

Hawkins tried to coax Shaylor to come up, promising him a fair fight. But Shaylor did not break the darkness with voice or presence.

At last we remembered Raikes, and demanded that he come forward and be chopped into fish-bait. He declined by silence. I offered monetary rewards, thousand pounds or something like that, for Raikes's body. But no one brought it forward. Hawkins, waving a bottle of gin, offered it in exchange for Raikes—to whomever should bring him up.

All the crew must have been watching us from the dark waist. Hawkins was undoubtedly amusing, and I tried to be.

Anyway, presently we heard a squawk, unmistakably from Raikes, and frantic cries for mercy. A moment later he was being half-carried, half-thrust up the ladder by Cockney George and Raulson. They wanted the gin; but what they really wanted was to see Raikes tormented.

The schooner, like a derelict, rode the seaway, with the wind slapping her sails every which way, while the rudder played back and forth at any chance surge of a wave. A mad night on a crazy ship, it was; and Hawkins, reaching down with one powerful arm, literally lifted Raikes by the neck and planted him on the deck, where his legs gave way and he crumpled abjectly.

Very solemnly, and I believe at first more or less sincerely, we debated whether to cut off his ears or his toes first. Probably if Raikes had been a man of normal size Hawkins would have mashed his head with one fist-blow.

I had Raikes crawling around all over the deck on his knees, praying for his life. I don't tell that in pride or for humor; but because it happened. I have a vague remembrance that some stinging, hard, angry woman's voice said:

"You are a fine pair of beasts!"

But that may have been the apocryphal remark of a shamed conscience. Probably not, though.

Raikes never ceased protesting that he had saved Hawkins; and Shaylor declined to answer from the shadows when I called upon him to know if it were true. We did not believe Raikes, of course.

Hawkins brought the brutal sport to an end somewhere around midnight with the remark:

"Aw, he can't help bein' a skunk"—calling it "sk-nunk."

"Now the Lord's aw-right," Hawkins went on with a serious air—he was serious, too—and with certain impressive, but restrained, though rather vague, gestures.

"The Lord knowed what He was doin' when He made sk-nunks, same as when He made me an' you, Red-Top. In His immish.

"I'm goin' lick shat Shaylor—I'm goin' lick shat Shaylor-sailor. I'm goin' beat 'im zo black an' blue he can't fin' 'imself in z-dark. Here, Raikes, old sk-nunk, z-down your troubles, an' git 'o —— off her. I'm goin' lick shat Shaylor in mornin'."

With that Hawkins gave Raikes the bottle from which he had been drinking, and the poor little quaking rat drank as if his throat had become a huge siphon; then he tumbled down the ladder and into the darkness.

Just when I fell asleep I can not, of course, remem-

ber. Hawkins slept by my side, but it was not his prodigious snoring that awakened me.

The sun came blindingly up into my face, and I felt as if my head had been split during the night. The two lanterns still glowed with sentinel loyalty at the ladders' top, though it was only the flame one saw and not the light.

But Dula was slowly, wearily pacing the deck. She was tired. She was exhausted. She was haggard and worn. She had kept the watch on the deck while we two drunken beasts snored like overfed hogs. I suppose her little slippered feet had kicked us in vain, and that neither scratchings nor scoldings had aroused symptoms of life. I prodded an elbow into Hawkins's ribs—again and again. He shifted himself from stomach to side, but I prodded his back; and at last he raised his head, sidewise, unsteadily, and by very apparent effort succeeded in getting one eye partly opened.

She wore her cape, but an arm was outside of it, and —significant of her vigil—she held the gun. She saw us, saw that we were awake at last, and for some moments stood looking at us with an expression that left nothing contemptuous to be said. Then she turned and glanced forward, where men were already astir, perhaps had been astir through the night, watching, waiting, sustained with a certain morbid curiosity not to miss anything, no matter what.

For a second or two her eyes looked out across the water. Nothing but water; not a speck, not an object but water. It was as barren and bleak as if God had pardoned all the doomed of earth and overlooked us; or perhaps could not forgive such drunken stupors, such tragic secrets, such evil purposes, such lives of abound-

ing sin as the *Sally Martin,* like a dead ship, sheltered amid her timbers. Then Dula looked at us and said wearily, blastingly:

"Mr. Williams could not rest through the night. He was worried over what might have happened to his—his—friends!"

Tired, exhausted, scarcely able to keep her feet, she went to the companion and half-stumbled down.

I looked at Hawkins and Hawkins looked at me. There we sat, with bursting heads and hot, aching eyes, throats brown and dry as if lined with baked clay.

Her words had seared us with scorpion scorn; words true, at once true and terribly ironical. After all, the men who do the brave and gallant and faithful things are not such as found themselves floatsam in the South Seas of those days—and we had only lived up to our reputations; but not even we had wholly lost the very fine virtue of shame.

But with a jealous effort to hide the fact and in a certain brazen attempt to be jocular I said—my head waggling unsteadily as I said it, and my eyelids struggling to shut themselves:

"Ben, ol' mate, you're a drunk'n dog."

"I know it," he said from the depth of his diaphragm, huskily sincere.

Then there was silence.

Now I have more pleasure in telling what happened. But this is far from being a story of regeneration. Hawkins and I were many times drunk again, and swore never to be sober—swore with those unfortunate oaths it is not possible for mere weak man to keep.

And in the days that immediately followed I wished for something, anything from rum to vitriol, anything at

all, to keep me from feeling the unspoken, even polite, distaste for me that Dula showed. More than ever, she became impenetrable.

Strange how it could be so when she had bared her heart in an hour's confessional fury; but it was so. The mystery of woman's art made it so.

We had to meet many times, say many words, but I was a stranger to her. Hawkins had never been anything else; nor did he think—or at least he pretended not to think—that her face had beauty, her presence a warning, flaming, invisible fire.

So he did not notice the chill impersonality that she threw about herself when speaking with him or standing near him. There were many good reasons why she should have treated him, at least, a little differently, a little less disapprovingly.

Hawkins took command of the ship. He was one of those men, often met and always surprising, who had hidden forces in them. He did not lose his humor—if something I grew to suspect of being largely unconscious may be called humor—but he revealed a tyrannical will, more directly threatening than Williams's, but almost as insistent. That is, instead of radiating a menace, he expressed it in words.

A sudden sincerity, mental, physical—perhaps spiritual—descended on him. He never lacked courage, but he seemed to acquire, as if bestowed gift-like, that marvelous "something" that often comes to apparently commonplace men when they assume responsibilities.

He took charge of the ship. Williams had been succeeded by Shaylor; for a drunken hour I had invested myself with the skippership; then Hawkins, without at

all claiming the honor, assumed it. He gave orders from the poop, and no man stirred, though all heard him.

Davenant, immaculate despite a night far from his silken bedding and scented bottles—I had inspected his room when looking for the gun—nevertheless maintained his groomed dignity, and stood enigmatically alone, watching, listening, unmoving. The crew sat and stood listless, stirless. Shaylor sat on the rail, his face turned aft; and he, motionless.

Hawkins stared down at them. I expected to hear him bluster, perhaps to draw the gun. He did draw the gun—and fling it to the deck. Then slowly, decisively, unhurriedly—he was awkward on the ladder anyway—he went down.

With blinking eyes and trembling breast I watched. Whether to think he had lost his sanity or to believe he, like some of the old-time wandering heroes, had suddenly discarded his wastrel rags and disclosed his real personality, was something that rather troubled my befuddled state of mind.

He walked directly for Shaylor. The crew saw what he was doing and edged over to that side. They came slowly, carefully, not attracting attention, and seemingly indifferent as to what happened—so long as they could be spectators.

Shaylor slipped off the rail and waited. Hawkins stopped within three feet of him and repeated the order. Shaylor struck, and the blow hit.

Hawkins had none of the evasive ability that saves a fighter from the driving knuckles. He was immense, awkward, stubborn and strong.

He had gone down into the waist looking for a fight, and he found it. He had gone down with his face bruised

and battered and scabbed from yesterday's fights with Shaylor; but Hawkins himself was a different man from that on the day before.

Shaylor beat and beat upon Hawkins's body, and dodged effectively. He might as well have been beating at a wave.

Hawkins pressed on. He struck and sometimes he did not miss. An amazing coolness seemed to possess him, as if all this battering was to be expected and really did not amount to anything after all. Not every blow reached him, for though he could not duck or dodge his thick, upraised arms were like interposed beams.

Shaylor hit him in the belly, and his heavy gasping could have been heard a hundred yards away. For a time he guarded his belly and let his face stand the shock of Shaylor's fists.

Hawkins was too long-suffering not to know what he was about. He had been beaten twice in a stand-up at fisticuffs, and realized that as a boxer he was nowhere Shaylor's equal.

But he pressed on, moving this way and that, on, on, with Shaylor against the rail and closed in. Shaylor was a powerful man, but a powerful man under a mountain is somewhat enfeebled. From that moment it became a fight of gouge and claw and twist and squeeze, knees, teeth, finger-nails, elbows were used—even gasping breath, mouth to mouth, was used in clipped, hurried curses.

Whether he planned and watched for the chance or luck gave it to him I do not know, but Hawkins got his arm about Shaylor's neck—clamped it into the elbow; then with slow, weary, almost monotonous blows of

his free arm, struck the man's face again and again and again and again.

The only variation was when Shaylor protectively tried to put up his arms. Hawkins then struck in the stomach. But it was the face he sought to smite, and he did—blow on blow. He still got them in return, for though Shaylor sobbed, actually sobbed, "Oh, for God's sake!" yet he lashed out frantically.

There was no mercy on the ships of those seas. Nobody had the right to ask it. It was an impertinence —as if the victor should respect the feelings of the beaten!

At last Shaylor, exhausted, whipped to his very backbone, refused to struggle or strike. He covered his face as well as he could, writhed about, sobbed inarticulately, but was too beaten to fight—even so much as a rat will fight though crunched between the jaws of a terrier.

"I knowed you'd funk out!" Hawkins gasped as he let the frightfully beaten man go.

Hawkins himself was marked as bloodily; but victory is an amazing tonic. Shaylor held staggeringly on to the rail. It was probably the only time in his life, since boyhood anyway, that he had been battered like that; and he was the sort of man who quit—or wanted to quit—when really whipped.

It was putting foot on the vanquished man's neck to say that he funked it. That was too strong and raw a word. Simply because he did not have the stuff 'way down deep inside of him that would not let him quit, no matter how badly punished, was no reason for calling him a coward.

But Hawkins had to have some revenge. He was entitled to something especial, since outward appear-

ance scarcely distinguished the champion. So he said that. After all he had the supreme right to say it.

Hawkins gasped until he got his breath back. He stood dripping blood and panting, but no—he wouldn't touch the rail to support himself. Not much!

Again Hawkins repeated his order. The men jumped forward smartly. Hawkins was no longer a ponderous clown. Shaylor, too much a seaman to question the law of the deck, obeyed.

That was a very miserable day for me. I felt as if I had been beached; or, worse, cast out by friends. I could still see them and hear their voices, but they were changed.

That is, Dula and Hawkins were changed. Excepting Raulson, I had not been friendly with the others. They had always rather veered off from me. But though Hawkins surprised them strangely, I am sure they liked him. Having won his right to the poop, they respected it.

"I don't know where Savaii is," said Hawkins, "but that's where we're goin'."

After much bungling we started off—not knowing where we were, and scarcely more than the general direction we were going.

Dula said that Williams wanted to see me. I went down, and was alone with him.

He lay very quietly, his eyes open, glaring at me. I must have been a disgraceful-looking object. Besides, I felt guilty.

Speaking low, but not weakly—not at all!—he said that he was not even dangerously hurt. He believed the bullet had pierced the lung, but passed through, not lodged there.

It made him dizzy, much as one has vertigo from holding the breath, when he stood or sat up. There was nothing better to do than lie still. It was exasperating to have to do that, but it could not be helped.

He had unaccountably slept—fainting was not to be admitted—and felt rested. He mentioned in a kind of an aside that it was the first time in ten years he had slept a half dozen hours at a stretch.

He told me all that in a third less words than I have taken. It was the only time I had ever heard him explain anything. He was obviously holding himself in. He was as much as ever in a mood for temper, and toward me.

Did I, or did anybody else, think that he was helpless? I had been frantically eager to get drunk—with the least possible delay. He had heard what went on last night.

His rough, knotted hands crumped the linen sheet in a tight grasp. He probably wished he had his fingers at my neck, but instead he throttled the clean sheeting that Dula brought from Davenant's room.

The course was to be laid for the island of Savaii. Did I understand? I did. Tell Shaylor so.

"Shaylor! Then he doesn't know," I said to myself.

Williams did not know. He was in a much more serious condition than he realized. I learned that he had tried to get up twice and fell back gasping, dizzy and choking with blood.

Dula had told him everything was all right; that I and Hawkins were drunk but that we were being let alone. He had thought that she had gone to her room and to bed when she had been holding the deck for two drunken louts.

Hawkins and I talked things over. There was

another compass in Williams's chest and some books on mathematics. Hawkins shook his head, saying he once had known a part of the multiplication table.

There was only one thing to do. He did it. I brought up the instruments and compass, and Hawkins brought Shaylor aft.

After some parleying, Shaylor agreed to make the best of a bad bargain and head for Savaii. Possibly he thought his position as navigator would give him a chance to get control of the ship again. And possibly he thought Hawkins was in earnest when he said that if Savaii wasn't raised there would be something happen, —— unpleasant.

Davenant was more of a problem. He had been restored to his stateroom. Imperturbably he went about his business of watchful, silent brooding. He made me nervous by the way he stared in my direction, but he said nothing—not a word.

Sometimes I fancied he smiled, that white, white smile of the even teeth. But I could never be sure.

Obviously Dula could not spend *all* of her time with Williams. She did spend most of it with him. And she, being afraid of Davenant—for Williams's sake, not her own—asked me to be with him when she was not.

"Does he suspect?" I had questioned, perhaps a little hopeful to get back to our basis of confidence.

"Oh," she said quietly, almost indifferently, "I told him it was Francisco."

This woman was interminably filled with surprises. Maybe I did not jump at that, but I was startled. I asked what Williams had said.

"He said—" She paused, and, showing a little animation, digressed to ask if Williams—she called him

"Mr." Williams—ever showed surprise or emotion? She seemed to have at once some regret and much admiration for that strange repression in his character. Without staying for my answer, she went on:

"He lay there watching me for the longest time, then said:

"'Davenant, was it? Davenant. Who *is* he?'

"And I told him."

"Told him!"

"Yes."

"Grahame—and all!" I cried.

It may have been fancy on my part; but I thought she showed a flushed trace of confusion. Perhaps she was fretted to remember how she had made me a confidant, and would have given much to have reclaimed her words. Anyway she shook her head and said coolly:

"Certainly not."

"And Williams—what did he say?"

I was right on the verge of quivering with excitement. For one thing, my nerves were frazzled.

"Why," she replied with a little wonder, "why, he didn't say anything more."

I do not believe that Dula and Williams talked much, at least not at first. But she read to him, and it is easy to slip from reading to talking. I haven't a doubt but that Williams did his best to wish that she would leave him alone; perhaps he really did wish it.

Strange, incomprehensible, it was how this woman of fiery blood and even murderous heart took on a certain pride in humbleness around him. She was quick to anticipate his wishes, or what would add to his comfort.

As near as I could tell, her attitude was one of cheery quietness. There was no visible intrusion of her love.

She might have been of a religious sisterhood and nursing him for the greater glory of Christ—with something of the tenderness that befits those who do good works in His name.

After all, tenderness in one woman is pretty much like tenderness in another, whether it be brought out by love of man or love of God; and I suppose that the chief difference between murderess and saint is that the saint did not happen to have a knife in her hand when she first learned how treacherous men could be.

We arranged it as best we could so that it would not appear to Williams that he was being guarded. He would probably have turned us both out and thrown the door wide open.

She had a stubborn little way at night of locking the door without his noticing it, and then sleeping in a chair. She said that he might want something. She locked the door so that she might sleep securely.

She was afraid of Davenant. Not for herself, but she evidently feared, as I did, that he would do whatever he could to prevent Williams's recovery. There was reason to suspect that Williams would make it very uncomfortable for Davenant.

Once Williams said to me, his eyes having followed Dula through the door:

"What do you think of her?"

I waved a hand in an impotent gesture, vaguely enigmatic. I had nothing to say. But he waited an answer. He ignored evasions. Nothing but answers appeased his questions.

I stumbled for ideas. Words, words, words—I could pour those out by the mouthful. His eyes remained on me. He had not asked an idle question. I had a sense

of confusion, with a struggling impulse to tell the truth working to get itself into words.

There was something almost unacknowledgably bitter for me in the truth. I wouldn't have acknowledged the bitterness—no, not even under his fists. Not even under what was more commanding than his fists, his eyes.

But the truth—that flung itself out. I was not aware of intention to say what I did. I simply said it:

"She loves you."

His face, somewhat thinned, did not change expression. A moment of silence, then with chill brutality he said:

"Yes. I know."

A pause.

"I wish you'd keep her out of here."

My mouth, though silent, must have shown by its gaping just about what I felt.

"You told me that before. It didn't matter then. But now—McGuire, I won't trust that woman!"

So he, too, had felt her charm, and he resisted it determinedly. She had thrust herself into his attention. He could not escape her. But one of his resolution could by force of will if not of inclination, distrust her.

"You don't——"

I started the question, but he cut it short.

"Impossible!"

"But she isn't——"

"She is at heart just as treacherous and cruel as any other. If she were the angel you think her——"

Angel! For a moment I lost what he was saying as my thoughts fluttered distractedly around that word.

"—the only way a woman feels she can show love for one man is by being treacherous to another."

"That's because you hate them all," I said weakly.

He answered as quietly as I had ever heard him speak, but coldly:

"You can't hate women. You can only pretend to."

"Then you——"

Again he anticipated my question, one that burst out involuntarily. I was disconcerted, and saying things in a way that I would never have dreamed of saying them to him.

"No," he said tensely, but scarcely above a whisper. "It is *you* who love her."

I was speechless.

"Of course," he went on, but his voice was not sarcastic, "from a respectful distance."

"I don't think she is an angel!" I cried confusedly.

"Then you do know why she is going to Dakaru?"

"Do you?"

"Yes. Raikes told me," he said. "You too?"

I nodded. Raikes *had* told me. Someway I felt I was doing right, even protecting Dula a little—though why I should protect her is something for wiser men than I to explain—by not disclosing that she also had told me the same thing.

"And do you know why I am going to Dakaru?" he asked with something that resembled a smile.

It wasn't a smile, of course. But his lips did have a queer twist.

Of course I did not know why he was going.

He said:

"For two things. First to replace the schooner I stole. Then to apologize."

"Skipper!"

He affirmed that incredible, utterly preposterous statement with a slight nod.

"You are mad!" I cried.

He did half-smile.

"Grahame! He has done everything against you. And he butchers natives—you know that," I added.

Williams hesitated thoughtfully, then spoke slowly:

"I've learned about Grahame since then. He is a brute, but he is honest. I don't admire him, but I can't blame him.

"When he first went to Dakaru he treated the blacks kindly. He was new to the South Seas. He took whatever blackbirders brought—and the cannibals killed and ate his wife. The mother of that girl we saw."

It was as if my body had crumbled and my brain was being knocked about like a shuttlecock. I did not know what to say. I did not have the faintest idea of saying anything; all the less composure because he appeared to be expecting my approval!

I did not feel approval or disapproval. Only astonishment. Everybody in the world was mad, stark mad—and Hurricane Williams was not implacable.

"Apologize!"

He used that soft, civil, easy, scrupulous word, the same word men used when they accidentally trod each other's feet on the dance-floor.

And Grahame—Dula's dead mother must have had something to do with that cannibal feast. Her insatiable ghost had ranged the world over. Taken a revolting, vicarious revenge. . . . It is so easy sometimes to be superstitious.

After all, Williams would do that. A curious reac-

tion of the wrongs, injustices, he had endured would cause him to make frank restitution, even apology, when he had done a severe injustice to some one else. Probably it was only by doing so that he kept the courage to be merciless at other times. I do not know.

"But you are taking them there—they will kill him!" I stammered at last.

For the first time I heard Williams laugh. I do not care to hear anything of the kind again, though his laughter made scarcely a sound. I don't know what he laughed at. Dead men must laugh like that when they hear the clods clattering down on their coffins—laugh with a kind of sardonic mirthlessness that the people left behind should think there is anything worth while in life.

And perhaps Williams felt joyless amusement that anybody should think life or death was anything to care greatly about. Or it may have been that he laughed so soundlessly because God, or the gods, or whatever it is that gives man trouble, always invested whatever he did, or tried to do, with some kind of ironic paradox.

CHAPTER XI

RED SINS AND WORDS BLACK AS CURSES

A MONTH later I was as near Heaven as I ever expect to be. And I could drowse through eternity very well if left alone on a white-hot beach.

I had been there some days. For me, it was like coming home. All the children in the village knew me. To them I wasn't a *papalagi*—outlander, foreigner.

All the maidens envied me my red hair and tried to coax from me the secret for bleaching it. Ten years before other maidens, now mothers of some of the impudent imps, had tried to wheedle my secret out; and taught me their liquid tongue in the moonlight, no doubt that I might better understand their coaxing.

Women are alike, always; the first thing the mother of them all did when she awakened in Eden was to rub her lips with a red flower's petal and, snatching cruelly the fluttering butterflies, dust the powder from their radiant wings against her cheeks. The only place to learn a new language is in the moonlight; that is in the shadows of a moonlit night. It was there Adam was trained to say, "I love you," as some years later in another and serpentless Eden I, in less than one lesson, learned *aloha ai*—and much else.

Lelela was a village of five or six hundred souls, and some of them "saved." The same whaler that brought me ten years before had brought an elderly priest; a man already worn with years, calm, wise, patient.

Father Rinieri had not been a half-day's journey from the village since. Except for his robe one would never have suspected that he was a missionary. A missionary can have no greater praise than that from me.

Other missionaries had come and gone, all Yankees, prayerful and easily horrified. There was always one or more at the village. Two were there now. They very openly exposed their belief that the priest was an emissary of the devil.

They had even tried to save me from the evil influence of the priest after seeing him embrace me on the sand when I splashed wet and panting up on the beach. They had furtively caught me off to one side in the evening and tried to talk about my "soul."

Not in the whole ten years had Father Rinieri mentioned my soul, or heaven or hell. They retreated fully convinced that I was a vivid illustration of the unregenerate. But I am far ahead of my story.

After Hawkins had taken the deck the voyage had been uneventful. For one thing, Williams began to come on deck. He moved very slowly, cautiously.

It had been strange to see him, always like a tiger against a leash, sitting quietly, motionless. That took as much sheer will as anything he had ever done.

He shot the sun himself and made corrections on Shaylor's calculations. They needed them.

Also he learned how Hawkins happened to be in command. He made no comment. Not even when I said:

"You know, Hawkins does hold a master's certificate. Won it in a poker game."

But he had turned away his eyes.

Life became very uneventful. Except for Raikes's

continual implorings for me to believe that he had saved Hawkins's life instead of betrayed him, I was left almost as much alone as if I had been a stranger.

Raikes had tried to talk to Hawkins, but had been roughly told to shut up. He even approached Williams with the tale of woe. Williams listened and said, "All right," and nothing more.

Raikes came to me to find out what "all right" meant.

"That you'll be cooked at Savaii," I had told him.

"Samoans ain't cannibals," he declared.

"Yes, but at Lelela are good friends of mine. They'll eat a fellow any time to oblige me."

To court my sympathies he reported from time to time that Shaylor was "showin' a lot o' canvas in the fo'c'sle," boasting that he would yet be revenged on Williams, Hawkins and myself. Raulson, being asked, said it was true.

The men were afraid of Shaylor's fists, and listened respectfully. But they disliked him.

They were devoted to Hawkins, praised him among themselves. They did their best, too, to make life unpleasant for Raikes.

During those days Davenant conspicuously avoided Williams. Dula was again on deck most of her time, but she ignored me. She usually sat near Williams, but they talked very little.

Two or three times I heard voices at the foot of the companion, insistent voices, and presently Dula would come up, a little flushed, her eyes angry—running away from Davenant.

Williams had not forgotten his fake log. He wrote a little in it and dictated some to me. I finally got

enough out of him to understand what he had in mind. A clever idea, too.

He had at first thought the shortage of supplies on board would force him to put into some mainland, or possibly Fijian, port, where the chances of his being recognized as Hurricane Williams were not great. In leaving the ship to go ashore he would fall overboard and pretend that his papers had been in a tin box under his arm, and lost.

Thereupon he would demand new papers from the consul—and if necessary offer the log to support his story. He intended to keep the log up, for there was still the chance that it might be used.

Taulemeito, the chief of chiefs at Lelela and vicinity, was very much of a heathen. He was a great handsome fellow, who disliked missionaries, traders and Germans of any description.

He did not consider Father Rinieri a missionary. "Missionary" in his mind was associated with arrogant meddlesomeness and interminable shouting about a lake of boiling fire, bigger than the ocean.

And Taulemeito, who had a lot of common sense, knew that anybody who talked like that was a liar. There could be no such lake.

He bitterly regretted the persistent encroachment of whites. And his village was much more free from them than any other large village of the Samoan group.

But he liked Williams, who was honest and generous and did not meddle. Their friendship was many years old. The more the whites denounced Williams the better Taulemeito favored him, and took no trouble to conceal it.

Finally one of the numerous German gunboats that were prowling like hungry dogs all over the South Seas, "protecting German interests" and very obviously looking for any stray bits of property to annex without offending England or America, came to Lelela to remonstrate. The captain had learned that Taulemeito had given Williams permission to blast an entrance through the inner reefs and thereby secure excellent harborage.

That was a monstrous offense. Something would have to be done about it. If Taulemeito would accept a German consul as adviser and give German planters lands and German traders certain monopolies, and turn Williams over to the few German soldiers that would be left to seize him on his return, then the monstrous offense would be ignored.

Taulemeito was furious, but he had the judgment not to show it. He was too proud to yield, too sensible to fight.

So he implored the pagan gods of his fathers to send a terrible storm and wreck the German on the outer reefs —for though there was the entrance into the harbor, the German had been timid about using it. It was very narrow.

The terrible storm did not arrive. But a British gunboat did. In some mysterious way the Britisher, who was probably detailed to keep German topsails on the horizon, learned why the German had slipped from the Apia Harbor—after circulating the report that she was homeward-bound.

Taulemeito was very sorry that the gods of his fathers had compromised on a British gunboat when it was a hurricane he had wanted. But as the British captain came through the reef-entrance and complimented Taule-

meito on his harbor and said that even if Williams had done it it was a good job, the chief decided that maybe his gods knew what they were about after all. But he was exceedingly disappointed that there had not been a battle. The German departed and the Britisher, after many compliments and no requests, also disappeared.

And whenever Williams showed up, Taulemeito welcomed him and gave him the supplies that had in one way and another been gathered and stored away. Perhaps traders and storekeepers even as far away as Apia wondered what on earth that "heath'n king" was doing with so much tinned stuff, rope, canvas, oil and—tar. There was no accounting for the tastes of heathen kings. And though strictly against the law of three nations, Taulemeito often succeeded in getting powder and even dynamite—and Williams paid him well.

After the affair at Dakaru, when Williams had released Samoans from Grahame's slavery and caused one man from Lelela itself to be returned home, Taulemeito himself declared Williams to be his own brother and threw the protection of his kingship—such as it was—about him. That was how it came about that the *Sally Martin* was a welcomed ship at Lelela.

We had made a trip of a good three thousand miles and used up some three months' time; and of course Williams thought the schooner had to be bleached and scraped, *et cetera, et cetera.* In cold climates a fellow may find it convenient to do a little work to get his blood circulating. But not at Lelela. Williams must have got his brother the chief to take an interest, for everybody from babies to doddering ancients turned to and made so much clatter and bustle that my absence was not noticed. Yet the crew had a rich, glorious time. Work was like

play; play like what it always was in those unchristianized days. Everything that a generous Creator, who must have loved the old Samoans well, had bestowed in the way of food was laid at the feet of the men; bananas, cooked, as Hawkins said "forty-'leven ways," breadfruit baked in the juice of coconut, yams, *palusami,* though there was also meat; fish and fruit—and flowers.

Many a *puaka* squealed plaintively, but in vain. We were ravenous for green vegetables and fruit. Hawkins undertook to eat all the custard apples on the island. To our weary, hungry bodies it was all *nonu fiafia*—"fruit that makes you happy."

There were sports, games and dances, laughter and flirtations. *Sivas* and—horrors—the dreadful *po-ula* in the moonlight.

The Yankee missionaries came to see the dance that lost people their souls, and had all their expectations gratified. I fancy they nearly lost their own *angangas* to see those exquisite, rippling rhythms of dark, moonlit bodies fluttering in wild grace—frenetic, but never awkward, never without a liquid, symmetrical movement.

Nothing was withheld from the *malaga,* the traveling party, of the chief's brother. Big, bearded men, solemn old fellows who hadn't laughed since the treacherous barbecue at Turkee, made themselves ridiculous with merriment.

The Yankee missionaries, like a pair of dyspeptic Jeremiahs, brooded gloweringly. Father Rinieri went his way, gentle, perceptive; the imperturbable half-smile, like a flame of benediction, never vanished. He never went far without a troop of imps charging down on him, nudging and jostling to get their little black heads under his hands.

I wondered what Dula thought of it all. Davenant himself, perhaps the more troubled because Williams ignored him, gave no sign of enmity; stared in a sort of detached curiosity. He kept apart from everybody—or seemed to. And it was not by accident that I found he and Shaylor were sometimes together at night.

The chief's wife, one of them—Taulemeito was a remorseless old sinner and had three or four wives; and he kept peace in his family, too—took Dula into her own house. There was no way of my knowing what she thought of having no privacy; of having groups of eager, friendly, chattering girls and women crowding in upon her, fingering every garment in wondering innocence, watching her dress, watching her undress, pressing gifts upon her, laughing, decking her willy-nilly with flowers, offering perfumes of their own distillation, and begging the secrets of her own toilet. She found some relief, if it was relief, from the pressing attention of the irrepressible women, in the company of Father Rinieri.

We stayed on and on at Lelela. I had begun to wonder a little if we would make Dakaru within the hundred and eighty days.

Some other people may have also wondered a little that Williams remained so long when he knew it was risky. The crew did not have much time to wonder—they were that contented.

They did learn what Williams's reputation was like in those waters. It was known all over Australia, too; but from Samoa westward was where he had made that reputation what it was.

They learned how greatly many white men were afraid of him. The German traders then at Lelela, three

of them, bowed respectfully and kept out of his way. They even seemed to tremble under his eyes.

Didn't they have reason to tremble? Wasn't he a ferocious pirate—killed men quickly, as men killed flies?

Wasn't he sometimes called "Williams the Cannibal"? He was.

And the German traders probably believed it. One thing was certain: They believed that Williams was dangerous.

The crew was having a perpetual holiday. The *Sally Martin* had long before been put into shipshape, and the men lay around eating, flirting, sleeping, doing nothing with that magic ease that settles upon men in the tropics.

The original land of the lotus was Samoa. I know other beach-combers say it was some other place. But they are wrong. It was Samoa.

I know. I have been drunk on every island from Tahiti to Ysabel. Well, maybe not on every one. There are about three thousand of them, and some of the stuff a fellow has to put up with in the remoter places is weak. Wouldn't make a fly dizzy.

Williams, always a solitary man, kept pretty much out of sight when the work was done. Except that he had not shown his usual energy at work, and a new uninterpretable expression—which I thought might have been due to a certain thinness of face—shadowed his features, he appeared to be but little the worse for his wound.

Just at the present he was waiting for a boat to return that Taulemeito had sent to Apia. Williams wanted dynamite. Taulemeito had none in store for him.

A note to an American engineer—doing some work for a German company, who had on previous occasions

furnished the explosive at about ten times its value—had been sent. It was better to try to get it that way than to go himself or send me. He was known at Apia, known well. I was untrustworthy—and known well to every shanty bar on the apia beach.

Malua, a young chief himself, and a man of temper, was in charge of the party. Had his tongue been cut out he would not any sooner have told where Williams was. The American engineer would know; but that was one of the risks that had to be taken.

Let me say here and get it over with that, though Williams—who knew a great deal about explosives and how to make them explode—tried always to have dynamite on hand, he wanted it this time for a definite and commonplace purpose. After he reached Dakaru he intended to go up to the Carolines, where the drowsy Spaniards were not inquisitive, and the officials were sympathetic toward any one who weighed their palms with gold. He knew where there was an obscure and excellent harbor, if, like the one at Lelela, an entrance was widened. He would get hold of a ship somehow and, as restless and foredoomed to fail as the accursed Flying Dutchman, start again.

At the back of his head, I surmise, was the vague idea of getting together a fortune and some day quietly returning to civilization. That is the sort of mirage that all the wild, roaming, reckless men of the far places see, though down at the bottom of their souls most of them realize they would rather die than settle amid the stupid comforts of their tamed fellows.

Anyway, this would be the only chance he would have of getting his precious dynamite without returning to Samoa—and for months to come gunboats, if not sol-

diers, would be watching Lelela. There were two or three resident traders there, Germans stubbornly hanging on and being solicitously well behaved and agreeable; there were missionaries, converted natives, and others too, ready to babble excitedly.

A trading-schooner, bringing supplies to the resident storekeepers, might come at any time and scatter the report—though there was a poor chance of its getting out to do the scattering if it came before we left.

Nor was there any chance of a boat getting away until Malua returned from Apia. Taulemeito prohibited any boats going beyond the outer reefs. But Williams had to wait after he was ready to leave.

That sums up the general situation.

Raikes knew how to catch the palm-sap, and the little patience and no labor needed for its fermentation appealed to him; so he got drunk. He was harmless enough, but more lamentatious than ever. When I am sober, drunken men are disagreeable in my sight. Even after—to be done with him—I promised never to doubt in the least that he had been a true friend to Hawkins and myself, he persisted in wanting to prove it.

He was a venomous little devil. His present hate was Davenant and Shaylor. Davenant had money. He said Shaylor was getting it. Did I know they met frequently after dark? I did. Did I know Shaylor and the Yankee missionaries were "chummy"? I did—so did Williams. It is ghastly to see a one-eyed man cry. I walked off. I went down to watch Hawkins eat. That had very nearly become Lelela's favorite amusement.

Hawkins was an adored monstrosity to those simple natives. They never grew weary of wondering at his size. His heartiness and untiring fun made them love

him. But they, valiant eaters themselves, became obsessed with the futile ambition to see him so filled with food he would refuse another bite.

"My heavens, man," he said with aggrieved accent, stroking the huge outline of his body when I had sarcastically commented on his capacity, "you mus' remember I was empty!"

I told him Raikes was drunk, vaguely implying that we too could soon be likewise. He absent-mindedly waved the suggestion away, and looked with a kind of studious apprehension at the very large pineapple some giggling girls were triumphantly peeling. He ate it. His relish was insincere, but he ate it.

Then he very craftily saved his reputation by singing. He did not sing very loudly, it is true; but the second pineapple, which would surely have vanquished him, was laid aside while the giggling girls, cross-legged on the grass, listened to the amazing vocal rumble of a monotonous chantey.

Sometime after somebody gave me a drink of *kava.* Then I bribed a boy to bring down the shells of fermented juice Raikes had hired him to set in the coconut-palm.

And, being started, I took a *paopao,* a small dugout, and went to the ship; went into Williams's room, broke the lock and carried away the three remaining bottles. By night I was carried away with the idea of visiting and conversing with, and possibly disputing high questions of theology, with Father Rinieri—and also discussing the deviltry of Christians.

It was night, starlit, and the moon was not up. I had many things on my mind, and again was submerged in the recurrent world-weariness that ebbed and flowed in from time to time upon me.

I went into Father Rinieri's house. Dula was standing by a table, the oil lamp throwing its glow up into her dark, vivid face. A chair was by the table. An open book on it. She had perhaps stood up when she heard me coming. Somehow I did not then feel the least uncomfortable under her eyes, though she looked at me very hard, directly.

I waved a friendly hand, said something by way of greeting and sat down. She had treated me on the ship with a kind of pointed disregard that hurt, that reached down almost to a feeling of shame.

I had seen but little of her in the village. Now we were face to face, and I was wholly at ease.

She probably at once noticed the bottle under my arm, and for a moment seemed about to assume an attitude of chill disapproval. But I inquired for Father Rinieri.

He would be back presently. A baby was sick. A baby that had but recently been baptized, and the parents were a little fearful lest the sickness was punishment from the native gods. He had gone to reassure them.

Dula sat down. Her fingers idly closed the book. She adjusted the wick, or pretended to, and said:

"These people seem to think a great deal of you."

She looked at me as if awaiting an answer, if not an explanation. I was in a mood for using words. I told her these people were savages, which meant they didn't care for anything but the essentials of life—love, laughter and kindness; that awkward clothes, cold, heartless morals, and the cruel, merciless rigmarole of law were things they cared nothing about.

"And your people and mine," I went on, "come here and tell 'em God won't listen to prayers that aren't said in English!"

"Father Rinieri is Italian," she said quickly with a suggestion of pride.

"Well," I returned, "God used to require prayers in Latin. But the Yankees have changed all that."

She said almost fearfully that she believed I really meant it, and it was incredible—such words as I used.

I went off like a handful of powder touched by a match.

"Your blessed uncle, bearded to conceal his kinship with the devil; this fellow Shaylor, who seems to think every native girl is like a *taataa a le ala*—no, I won't tell you what it means—and those lean Yankees yeowling about sin to people that even haven't a word for it—*they* are Christians. And Hurricane Williams is a cursed outlaw, and heathen.

"So it was right for them to work with prayers, money and threats of God's sulphur lake on one of the half-converted fellows in Malua's party that's gone to Apia. And he's to spread the news so if there isn't a gunboat handy the law-abiding whites can put out in a whaler or trader, or something and come here and catch him."

I waved her into silence. Her face was aflame, anguished with surprise, fear, a mingling of emotions. Obviously too she was trying to doubt my truth.

"I know I'm drunk. I know I'm drunk," I insisted coarsely—though of course I was not anything of the kind. "I know what you think of me, too. But somebody had to get drunk, didn't they? With such a thing like that hangin' over us? Williams and I are all that know it—and now you.

"I came to tell Father Rinieri—'cause Williams made me swear not to tell a native or a member of the crew. He meant not to tell anybody, but I'm civilized enough

to know how to evade an oath. I can tell a woman or a priest—

"Hurricane Williams, the outlaw, cannibal-lover, brutal blackguard, pirate, ruffian, murderer, doesn't want Chief Taulemeito to find out 'cause he might kill Davenant, Shaylor, missionaries and all the natives that have learned to pray in English. Williams wouldn't believe a white man on oath— no," I shot at her cruelly, revengefully—"no, or a white woman either. But he does believe that no Lelelan would betray him. For one thing, Taulemeito would poke a spear into a native that showed any such symptom of being civilized—

"Aw, it isn't for any love of Davenant or Shaylor or the hungry Yankees that Williams's doin' it. He knows if Taulemeito killed them all the gunboats under heaven would come in here and hang Taulemeito, shell the village, blow to pieces the girls that put those flowers in your hair and the babies that Father Rinieri's christened, those larking boys yelling at play down there on the grass now, and the old, old hags that sit and mumble of their girlhood.

"That's what you white people do. I'm an outcast, a drunkard, half-naked, thievish beach-comber and proud of it!"

I was not proud of it, of course. But there *is* pride in shame, a certain glory to be squeezed out of even self-debasement.

She flared: "You don't hate them any more than I do. I would ask nothing better than to stay here, stay right here, become as one of the natives——"

She paused, her voice changed to a lower pitch, and I saw the subtle presence of some kind of doubt, though she said: "—after we go—after we come back from—"

Her slender arm reached out in a slow gesture toward the ocean and Dakaru.

Then meditatively, scarcely speaking for me though directly to me, she said

"My grandmother was very religious, but after her death— He"—another gesture toward the doorway—"he is almost the first priest I have seen since then, and—and—I haven't forgotten as much as I thought."

She added quickly, almost fiercely clenching her hands: "But he shan't know! His lips would shrivel before they would pronounce, *'absolvo te'* to me.

"Oh, I must, I will go through with it! My poor mother—I'd rather lose my soul too than—than—let him go on contented and thinking he is safe!"

There were actually tears in her eyes. Her mother had died outside of the church when she died by her own hand; and that must have been a terrible grief to the old grandmother, and in a way contributed to Dula's hatred for Grahame.

I blurted out, probably with some nebulous, half-formed intention of giving her a little relief of mind, that Grahame had not 'scaped scatheless. I told most of what I knew, and other things as well.

I told of how we—Williams and I and certain Samoans, some of them from this very village—had gone to Dakaru, of the way men ran and yelled and died; of the dogs and Portuguese; of the yellow-haired girl-child; of how Williams—the "nigger-lover"—had killed cannibals, suddenly gone wild, that rushed for the house; how Grahame rode and Williams sprang; of the knife that went like an arrow.

And I told of what Williams had learned since then, getting it from a Portuguese who had been on the island

at the time, and was one of those whom Grahame had made promise never to whisper the horrible story. But then the Portuguese, being far from Dakaru, had thought to win favor with Hurricane Williams by relating the grim, ghastly tragedy that had years before befallen his enemy; and he had told how the big Solomon blacks, dragged to Dakaru by slavers, had caught the woman—the wife—the mother of the radiant child—who had trustingly treated those cannibals as if they were human, had sentiments and feelings.

I told too that the blacks often threw their victims on to the fire alive to give the flesh a richer flavor. Dula had bent forward pressing her hands to her face before my story was ended. I had in my time seen a cannibal feast, a wild one, not baked in ovens, but in the hills quivering, scorched, raw. And I went on and on and on, transposing to Dakaru what I had seen in the uplands of Ysabel, telling all my sickened eyes had seen. Again and again she begged me to stop and cried out low-voiced, pleading, aghast.

But the gift of tongues was upon me. I could not stop. I had never told that unforgettable tale before, though memory of it had often awakened me chokingly out of sleep.

Williams too had been there. True, blacks had feasted on blacks; but he must, as I did, have envisioned the children, the women, the men of our own color and race that had suffered and perished likewise —for why else did that iron, cruel man avert his face and put his hand to his forehead when the wild brutes were only punishing other savages that had treacherously tried to kill him?

And I told her that it was because of what Williams

had seen at Ysabel, and elsewhere, that "he rushed back to Grahame's compound to protect your—sister!"

I had said it without thinking. A mere sense of the dramatic, one that often without forethought or intention makes me twist even the truth and imagine things that never happened, leaped unerringly to that word. Then too, I had nearly emptied the bottle I brought. Words, sentences, streamed out effortlessly, heedlessly.

"Since then he met the Portuguese and learned how her mother died. I know nothing of what's at the base of his brain, no one else does, but I don't believe he would have taken those Solomon Islanders back had he known why Grahame killed so many of them—

"You see, Grahame still treats 'em better than any other planter, except he butchers 'em first time they wiggle their toes over his faintest chalk-line. Break any kind of a rule, you know.

"Williams—I can't say he loves 'em. No. But he can't think the worst of them are bad as the worst o' the whites—and it's the worst of them that come down into these seas. Missionaries an' all! Thank God I'm damned, and no kin to any man that worships Him!"

I roared it out, for my story was done. And if there had been anything more blasphemous to say, and I could have thought of it, I would have said it. A sudden impulsive red anger was on me to say the worst and mean it. I don't think Dula heard, for I glared at her waiting for her to speak or look up, but she was still leaning over, her back to me, her hands against the sides of her head. She was sobbing noiselessly.

Then in the stillness I heard a slow step, right by the door. Father Rinieri had paused; he had heard.

He came in slowly, gently—so very slowly, quietly—

looked at me, looked across to the girl who had been caught and crushed between emotions as between millstones. He came up to me with a half-smile deepening, broadening like a glow upon his worn face.

His very presence was quieting. There was no anger, no offense, not even the twinge of an injury forgiven, on his countenance. It was as if from the serene wisdom of years upon years, and knowledge gathered straight from the hearts of men, he felt just the least little shadow of amusement for the hot words of fools who had no idea what they were saying or doing.

There was nothing of sorrow in his face. Nothing. He was too ripened with wisdom to show it, no matter how much he may have been hurt at heart. He glanced at the bottle in my hand, then into my eyes; and there was not a flickering trace of reproach, but only the old, calm, sweet gentleness, and somehow the impression of sympathetic understanding that had neither approved nor disapproved, and yet made one feel stirred, troubled with some kind of inner uneasiness away down where a discarded conscience still lurked.

He put an arm around my shoulders gently, affectionately. And he said in that low, full-toned, rich, tender voice whose very sound—no matter what the words—reached the ears like a benediction: "Dan, my boy"—he smiled, and there was actually light on his face— "if you were even as bad as you try to be, He would still love you!"

Father Rinieri lifted his hand slightly, pointing upward. Silence and pause; he raised his arm from my shoulder, for a moment softly rested his hand on my lowered head, then turned away toward Dula. I hurried out into the night, my head drooping, feet stumbling.

CHAPTER XII

AUDACITY IS LUCK—!

DAVENANT, those days, seemed to try not to be seen with anybody. But natives will babble and they notice everything. So in the dark I had crept upon him and Shaylor and listened, and learned that Davenant had first tried to interest the three German resident traders in an attempt to overpower Williams.

The Germans knew more about Hurricane Williams than Davenant, and they precipitously rejected the plan. Too, they knew how Taulemeito would take it, and they were painfully eager to be friends with the chief. He could make them rich men by simply letting them alone. Or he could ruin them by merely dropping a word that would be carried in all directions so that no man of that place would trade with them.

Then Davenant and Shaylor had turned to the Yankee missionaries and rehearsed the duty they owed the law to assist in having Williams apprehended. So when Malua's boat went—ostensibly by Amoa, though everybody knew it was going to Apia—it carried as one of the crew a native who had promised to spread the report that Williams was at Lelela. A native was likely to promise anything when he received as much money as had been given him.

But would he keep the promise? Would not the keen-eyed Malua notice there was something on the fel-

low's mind? Malua was too young to trifle with discretions; if he hated a man he killed him.

I frequently lurked near the meeting-place that Davenant and Shaylor used, and though much of what they said was mumbled too low for me to catch it, I had heard Shaylor say the crew would turn on Williams, that the schooner could be stolen out; and Davenant had spoken of the rifles in the cabin, and they were confident of putting together some acceptable plan if relief did not come from Apia.

Dula's name was mentioned. Shaylor complained that she ignored his efforts at courtesy. What Davenant replied I could not hear.

It was about time that Malua should return, and we were all more or less with eyes to seaward. Some of the natives had gone to the hills to scan the ocean's distant rim. Davenant, alone and apart from the village, walked back and forth.

"W'at's he goin' 'o do to 'im?" Hawkins demanded of me, sluggishly throwing an arm at the lone figure. "Williams, I mean."

"Can't say, Ben. One of these days he'll probably kill him just like that."

I snapped finger and thumb.

"I can tell what men say Williams once did to another fellow that shot at him from the back and missed. Williams gave him a pistol, one shot, an' didn't take a thing himself. Faced the gun at fifty paces empty-handed. And the fellow didn't miss, but Williams—empty-handed—caught him and broke his neck. Only I don't believe a word of it."

Hawkins cocked his head reflectively, then said:

"Nawp. That's the kind o' stuff these traders b'lieve.

But that's a mighty good way 'o kill a man. Make you feel yerself a he-ro. Only Carp Taylor's a mighty good shot, and I can't run. Now my i-dee of a nice quiet murder is to go set down on a fellow when he's asleep. Takin' on weight, Red-Top."

He patted his huge belly complacently.

"Takin' on weight. Let me enemies beware. An' say, if we stay at Dakaru long 'nough Carp Taylor'll show up. Him an' Grahame're thick. Know what he done to me, Red-Top? Had the crew knock me to sleep, 'en Taylor whaled me with a rope. 'F I ever catch that fellow 'sleep he won't have nothin' but a grease-spot for an ep-e-taph. . . . . But what's matter with Williams? He looks—you've noticed how he looks?"

I denied any such attentiveness. Hawkins ignored my denial.

"Think it's that woman?" he said with the very self-conscious effort of one pretending to have no interest in his question.

"What woman?"

Hawkins snorted. After meditating a moment he said:

"An' what's matter with her? I know a woman ain't happy 'less she's sufferin', but—say, Red-Top, don't s'pose Williams'll fall for 'er, do you? He acts funny. Just about like a fellow does when he begins to think maybe the lady is really dyin' for love o' him."

With a bit of spirit I told him he was a fool; that Taulemeito had offered his own sister to Williams, and a man had to have pretty strong objections to women to dare evade marrying a chief's sister. Moreover, as Hawkins could see, a fellow didn't have to be drunk to praise the beauty of Samoan damsels, as was absolutely

necessary when he went courting farther west, say over in the Solomons.

"Red-Top," he announced solemnly, having weighed my words, "I'm thinkin' of lookin' out for a Mormon mish-nary—so I c'n be convert-ted."

Our idyl was ended. Almost from that moment our peace fled. There are old men who somehow dodged death and the treachery of friends, who remember Hurricane Williams or his name; and when they talk of him they talk of what happened in the next few weeks.

According to the German Naval Bureau Williams was arrested at Lelela on the same day Hawkins and I sprawled in the generous, wide-reaching shade of a breadfruit-tree and discussed Mormons and things. What was done with him after the arrest doesn't appear in the archives.

It does appear, however, that sometime later the gunboat *Freidrich* was disabled by a hurricane (*sic*). Yet some people say the Germans haven't a sense of humor.

Hawkins and I were roused from our lethargic dialogue by an increasing air of excitement in the village. Some boys had rushed down from the hilly lookout to announce that a ship with smoke streaming and sails set was bearing toward Lelela from the south.

It was useless for Williams to try to escape to sea. He could not get out without being towed by boats. And as it was still morning the steam-driven ship would easily overhaul him before darkness came on.

Our crew suddenly recalled that they were pressed men and began to remember dear drab, dirty Turkee. They had been dragged from their homes and treated like slaves. As they babbled excitedly petals fell from the chains of flowers about their necks, and some of

them puffed heavily from over-loaded stomachs. They remembered that they had been badly abused, and now warm, well fed and rested, could not understand why they had put up with such treatment.

Raikes was very loud in his memory of wrong suffered, for as the ship came on there was no doubt as to her German and warlike character.

Some expected Williams to take to the hills. But Hawkins grumbled aside to me:

"'F he does I'll desert 'im, 'cause I simply can't climb trees or things."

"Look about you; look about carefully, Ben," I retorted, "and you probably won't hesitate at a little thing like an eighty-foot palm."

The natives, particularly the youngsters and girls, understood enough fragments of English—and those who understood best repeated what they heard with inaccurate emphasis—to know what Williams's men were talking. An uncivilized Samoan doesn't shrink much more than a Christian from treachery toward an enemy but never toward a friend.

Even the faces of the happy, thoughtless little tots were glowering, savage, miniature frowns. I laid a hand on Hawkins's shoulder, and with the other pointed afar through the trees where a small party of three or four natives with spears in hand were moving away toward the forest, and with them moved the two Yankee missionaries.

"What the devil!" he exclaimed.

I swept my arm farther to the left toward Taulemeito's house, where groups were moving, bristling with war-clubs and spears.

"We're goin' fight!" he cried incredulously, but with

a little of the eagerness of a man who welcomes battle, even one of spears and small arms against cannon.

I told him I did not know what was coming off, but that Williams would undoubtedly give himself up before he would let Taulemeito undertake a hopeless battle.

"And I would sooner think Davenant, over there with the German traders, would shave his beard than Williams'd give himself up—to Germans!"

The German traders with beards trimmed, faces washed, and in fairly clean white suits, seemed to have delegated themselves as a receiving-committee to welcome the officers of their country. And Davenant had attached himself to them. Shaylor joined the group.

Others of the *Sally Martin,* suddenly feeling the ties of white blood and noticing the bristling pageantry of Lelela, also approached as if to identify themselves with the German party, now in the ascendency.

"Le's go over an' tell 'em when they can go to hell," said Hawkins, straightening his elephantine shoulders and taking a step forward.

I clutched his arm, telling him that I approved his sentiments, but the natives might not understand. It would be better if we showed in some more unmistakable way that we were not white men.

"Hey, you son," Hawkins roared coaxingly at one of the little boys of not more than a dozen years, who, though their faith was shaken in human nature, still hovered hopefully about me, an old friend, and Hawkins, the most wonderful man they had ever seen.

"Wallamazooki, or whoever you are. Come 'ere."

The boy hesitatingly edged nearer, taking many glances at my face as if wondering if even I—who had spanked him from his creeping days—was going to let

him get into some kind of difficulty under pretense of friendship.

Hawkins stooped and earnestly asked the youngster if "you speak 'em hell-fire—go-to——?"

The boy was a little bewildered and stared up at me for enlightenment. But the other youngsters had closed in listeningly, and one precocious youth announced, frantically eager:

"I spek 'im, missa (mister). All same mish-i-man. I spek him!"

It was true that missionaries did make a frequent and extended—but no doubt quite proper—use of the words Hawkins had inquired of; and it is equally true that all children learn more readily to swear than to pray. And Hawkins did a very, very wicked thing in sending those young innocents to the beach to deliver certain profane messages.

True, he had intended that only one little boy should walk up and quietly present the compliments of Mr. Dan McGuire and Mr. Ben Hawkins to sundry and all, and express the deep and sincere wish that much evil would befall them, the slightest of which was an eternal bath in a lake of fire. Nothing was to be gained by it, of course, except that ineffable satisfaction of letting people know what you think of them.

But in his innocence Hawkins launched pandemonium. Those imps delivered their messages at the top of their voices. Other imps heard them from afar and came scrambling and screaming.

Hawkins, alarmed at the general demonstration, which had developed into rock-pelting without any lessening of vocal racket, yelled at his imps. They misun-

derstood his cry of "lay off that" for encouragement; and they declined to listen to me at all.

I was getting really uneasy. If Williams or Taulemeito had wanted a demonstration they could have arranged one without our interference.

Some one of the pestered group made the mistake of returning rocks at the children, and the screaming, eager, wild little rascals joyfully accepted the challenge. They rained words and whatever they could get their hands on; and so many missiles could not miss, though there was some very energetic ducking and dodging going on down at the beach.

And the gunboat was now close at hand, not more than a mile off the outer reef.

Things looked bad, and presently they looked worse. A group of warriors came running out of the village, spears in their hands, and they were yelling too. Two of the Germans made straight for the water, forgetful of their clean clothes; and the whole party would perhaps have undertaken to swim somewhere had it not soon appeared that the native men were rebuking and silencing the children.

It appeared that Taulemeito was to receive the German captain in all the dignity and pomp his savage court was able to present; and he sent word that a place awaited the traders upon his right hand. Also that he very much desired to have his heart lightened by the presence of the others.

It appeared like an obvious effort to make amends for the insults of the children, if not a somewhat humble attempt to secure at the eleventh hour good grace from the party that could make trouble for him if it com-

plained to the gunboat. But appearances are deceptive in that part of the world.

Taulemeito's official house was a large structure apart from other houses on the border of the *malae,* or green common, where all the important sports and councils of the village were held. The walls of the house were mats, and on a function of state important enough to cause the chief to use the house, these were folded up and everybody, from the chiefs and leading men who squatted cross-legged in a semicircle about him to the women and children hovering on the outskirts, was a spectator.

Hawkins and I loitered about among the agitated natives. I knew it would be some time before the ceremony began, for Taulemeito had not yet come from his smaller and private residence near by, where he enjoyed a certain kingly exclusiveness and privacy—being about the only person in that merry, hospitable village who did.

Williams sent for me, and when I reached him his message was brief and surprising.

"Watch Davenant. If need be, kill him."

A dozen questions tried to leap out at once, but all I could say was:

"What the devil's up?"

Hawkins must have received instructions of some kind, too, for I saw him amid the frankly hostile glances of both the natives and the whites edge in close to the three traders; and being unable to sit cross-legged he half-sprawled on his stomach.

Davenant had the faculty of appearing to be apart even when in the midst of a group. Shaylor, talking very loud and rather impudently, was on his left hand.

Perhaps they thought I scrouged in near them to overhear. Shaylor ignored me with large concern, but Davenant gave me a long steady stare and smiled; that is, showed his long rows of exceedingly white and apparently sharp teeth.

I noticed Father Rinieri and Dula coming to places evidently made for them some distance removed from the immediate semicircle, facing the seat Taulemeito would occupy, but much nearer than any other woman had. Dula's eyes searched restlessly for Williams, and when she saw him, squatting motionlessly, eyes on the ground, she looked at him almost steadily.

The *Friedrich* had hove-to beyond the outer reefs. By the set of her sails and the smoke curling from her funnel it was apparent that she did not intend to spend much time at Lelela. Well, no one wanted her.

Two boats came ashore with officers and armed sailors. They were businesslike. Also perhaps a little apprehensive at the sight of the welcome arranged for them. They were greeted at the beach by a party headed by the *tulafale,* the chief's spokesman, orator, prime minister, or what-you-will. The symbol of his rank is a long staff—symbolic perhaps of the length of his tongue.

Captain Lumholtz was an excited little man not greatly unlike a miniature copy of Hawkins, and aroused the admiration of the natives by his large display of gilt and braid. He carried a sword longer than his own legs.

He had with him the treacherous member of Malua's crew and was intent on using him as an interpreter. In broken English—for the miserable Senva had sailed on a whaler and knew more English than was good for him—Captain Lumholtz, through Senva, demanded Hurricane Williams at once and forthwith. There would be no

trifling, no argument, no powwow. And the puffy captain swept a pudgy arm toward his stolid sailors.

He was persuaded, however, to come up and address himself to the chief. Senva was thoroughly frightened, for certain remarks were made to him that he did not translate.

Now it happened that Taulemeito, who was brave and headstrong and seemed to think there was some kind of magic in Williams, had stubbornly determined to assert his rights against the whole of Germany if need be. He, of course, did not begin to appreciate the resources of a European nation. He had plenty of rifles and powder. He had Williams at hand to lead the fight. Williams probably would have readily taken to the hills. It would not have been the first time he had to sacrifice everything he had in order to escape.

But Taulemeito swore that he would declare war on the gunboat. At most it did not have more than eighty men on board. It was a German gunboat. German gunboats didn't dare come into the harbor.

Now a British gunboat would have been different. On such trivialities does colonial prestige hang.

Captain Lumholtz, at once nervous and pompous, with two young officers scarcely less bedecked in wrinkled full dress, having left the armed sailors on the outskirts—where they were at once overwhelmed with coconuts, fruit and various delicacies by natives utterly incapable of not being generous—came stepping carefully through the squatting circle. With difficulty he eased himself down into as nearly a cross-legged position as was possible for him.

As he appeared, one of the German traders had exuberantly begun to raise his voice in some overjoyed wel-

come. But Hawkins growled. He more than growled, for he lifted a war-club borrowed from a native near by. Taulemeito too with slow dignity had turned his head and crushed the German with a long, deliberate glance.

Captain Lumholtz, being new to the South Seas, not familiar with native ceremony, and perhaps finding his cramped legs unbearable, did not appreciate fully the Kava—*Ava;* for the Samoans have no *"k"*—ceremony, where girls, a little to one side of the chief and under the supervision of the *tulafale,* were chewing the root, at the same time swaying their bodies rhythmically, gracefully. Nothing of importance takes place without Kava being served, though the preliminary may be a little monotonous to one sitting painfully on unaccustomed legs.

Captain Lumholtz decided that it devolved upon him to begin, and he addressed Senva, bidding him translate his demand for Hurricane Williams. The captain had scanned all the white men he saw, and he had not perceived Williams at all. Senva, dreadfully frightened, began. But he was cut short by the irate Taulemeito.

"Who art thou, born of a pig, to speak to my face in the presenec of chiefs and friends? Tell him who carries his long knife across his belly lest it trip his feet, that Taulemeito will cut thy head from thy shoulders and in his presence, here!"

Two seconds of startled silence followed. Then Williams sprang to his feet, shouting at Captain Lumholtz.

"There," he cried, an arm like an outthrust sword leveled at Shaylor, "is the man you want!"

It was as if he had suddenly become obsessed by a grim sense of humor. It was incredible. I felt my bones turn to jelly, and a shiver of amazement went through

me. For seconds every one was jarred speechless; the psychic breath, so to speak, knocked out of them.

Captain Lumholtz jerked his head nervously, eagerly, toward Shaylor, who had opened his mouth and half-lifted his hands stupidly. I heard Hawkins's low-voiced rumbling threat to the men beside him, commanding silence—with the club.

I suppose a hubbub would have broken out at the next instant if Williams had not begun to speak. He said probably fifty words and he said them rapidly, in Samoan and to Senva.

I never knew a man who had such convincing, commanding force to his words. Probably it was because he always really did mean what he said and backed it up with every ounce of his fierce strength. Anyway in two swift sentences he told Senva to identify Shaylor as Hurricane Williams or he, Senva, would die then and there.

Williams's eyes swept along the row of white men, along the traders, along the crew, ignored Shaylor and rested on Davenant for a fraction of a second. Williams's look was a warning, cold and dangerous.

Shaylor, stammering, inarticulate, was blurting a livid, profane denial. I felt a movement from Davenant who, cool, determined, was about to get to his feet. I caught him by the trousers band and jerked him down and he felt the muzzle of a revolver at the small of his back.

Under Williams's eyes, following his orders, I always lost my indecision and seemed caught up, supported, by some strong impulse. Davenant turned his head, a glitter of fright for once in his eyes, and he did not smile.

"There are my crew," said Williams, cutting through Shaylor's voice and flinging a gesture toward the sur-

prised, palpitating men of the *Sally Martin.* "Ask them!"

That was too much for even Shaylor. He gaped stupidly at the men, but as with one accord they avoided his eyes.

"Do you mean—" he began.

"There is my log," said Williams, lifting a book and holding it in readiness for Captain Lumholtz's inspection. "I pulled this man from a wreck at sea. He tried to capture my ship—did capture her. I was shot—in the back."

One of the German traders gasped: *"Mein Gott!"*

Shaylor was on his feet, cursing wildly and shaking his arms furiously—and with every word and every move showing himself to be such a man as Captain Lumholtz and his officers must have imagined the burly brute Williams to be.

Williams's voice, sharp, not high-pitched, came clear and distinct through Shaylor's agitated protests. He was brief, but what he said seemed to clinch his position: He declared that fortunately he also had known Taulemeito for many years and they were friends, so he and his crew had been well treated. But he believed Taulemeito would be willing to give up "that man Williams" (as he called Shaylor) if Captain Lumholtz insisted.

Captain Lumholtz had been glancing through the log. Whether or not he could read English with even as much facility as he spoke it is doubtful; but he was apparently satisfied. He closed the book and dropped it to the ground beside him.

"Him Hu'lly Williams!" Senva eagerly volunteered, pointing at Shaylor.

Senva cried it frantically. Whether he had caught Williams's eyes or his chief's I do not know.

There was not a native even to the jostling, breathless outskirts of the throng that did not understand what was being done; and they were excited, inwardly bursting with glee that the hateful gunboat men were being hoodwinked. They did not appreciate that Williams was taking a rash chance to save the village from vengeance.

He had planned it evidently from the time he realized how stubbornly Taulemeito was determined on fighting. Williams had had the two Yankee missionaries removed from the village because he knew that they could not, would not, be intimidated into silence. There is something about even a Yankee missionary that commands respect when it comes to personal courage.

"I coom dedermined to half dot man," said Captain Lumboltz, blinking wickedly at Shaylor. "Und by —— I half 'im! He iss a byrate, a —— byrate. I take 'im to Ghermany und dey hang 'im dere!"

The words were much more chilling, menacing, than they appear repeated in broken dialect; and Captain Lumholtz in spite of pudginess was evidently a man of firmness.

Words passed between Taulemeito and Williams, and Williams translated that the chief was ready to give Shaylor up at once. Shaylor acted like a man already on the gallows, almost exhausted with terror. He appealed to the crew. He implored Davenant. Williams crossed to him, and the very glare of Williams's eyes seemed to silence the miserable fellow.

The people made way for the German sailors, who marched in, took possession of Shaylor and with abrupt, military quickness marched off again.

Shaylor was a broken man. Even I felt a sudden sympathy for him, though I knew he was far more safe than if he remained within striking distance of Williams.

Williams seldom gave warning if he had cause for a man to die. But an appeal, an explanation to an American consul in any port would start investigation to get him off free; though Shaylor probably would not be able to make such an appeal until he had been carried clear to Germany.

Captain Lumholtz, though stiffened with pride and pleasure, was exceedingly agreeable. He bowed clatteringly over the hand of Taulemeito and pledged the eternal friendship of Germany. He shook the hand of Hurricane Williams, thanked him for his service, wished him success and promised full punishment upon the terrible pirate—the "byrate" that certainly looked the part.

And when he was gone three portly German traders had tears rolling down their cheeks. Hawkins had threatened to brain the first who opened his mouth, so they had not even greeted the glittering representative of their nation, the protector of their interests. However, they were solaced somewhat by certain concessions which Taulemeito in a cheerful mood extended to their trading.

Hawkins in speaking of the incident remarked:

"I never had a fist on one o' them war-billies b'fore. Wonde'ful how the heft of 'em just makes you want 'o hit somebody. No wonder them Dutches kept their hatches battened down."

After a pause, reflective, studious, he said earnestly:

"Red-Top, it's funny, but I don't know whether I want 'o laugh or cuss or say a prayer."

There was merriment in Lelela that night. Samoans have a high sense of humor; most of their conversation

is teasing, fun-making, ridicule and jokes. And they were wild with gaiety. There was no hope, no expectation of keeping the joke on the gunboat a secret; but the morrow is always far off. Besides there was the good chance that the imposition would not be discovered until the prisoner had been taken clear to Germany—if he were not hanged on a yard-arm first.

Strange that Lumholtz had not mentioned the reward his country offered. Perhaps it had slipped his mind. Perhaps he was grateful that no one else mentioned it, so there would not be the inconvenience of having to share, to divide it.

I went to Williams, who sat moodily alone in Taulemeito's private house.

"The devil loves his own," I said. "But Hawkins forgot an' slipped a prayer toward Heaven. Maybe that's what pulled us through. But——"

He glanced at me; and his eyes were silencing. Perhaps he was relieved to see that I was not drunk. I do not know. He seldom showed that he cared one way or the other.

For a long time there was silence; or at least it seemed a long time to me. Then he said, without looking at me, and in short quick-flung sentences, that he would give a thousand pounds if he could get a British or American consul to come into Lelela and raise his flag.

Taulemeito would be outraged, but it was a choice of evils. The Germans eventually would make the village pay for that day's work—unless a British or American flag were there.

"The Germans will make them pay, make them pay," he repeated.

Then jerking his head up, he glared at me, his body

contracted as if about to leap, and involuntarily I shrank. Slowly, tensely, taking an oath upon himself, he said:

"So help me God, I'll wreck the ship that shells this village if I have to swim to get her, and go down with her!"

Williams had never said anything like that before, had never so challenged the impossible. The fleeting fear that he *was* mad, as some men declared, raced across my brain and vanished.

No. No madness there; only the daring and determination to have vengeance on whomever harmed his friends.

Silence again, and a long pause. I started to slip away. I had no place to go, nothing to do; for oddly enough I did not feel like joining in the tumultuous celebration of the village. Hawkins was in the midst of glory; but the other white men, strangely quiet—uninvited for one thing—sat apart, talking low-voiced among themselves, wondering how and why they had been silenced, wondering that Williams had known—much less dared such a thing—that they would sit like mummies, fear-embalmed.

The natives were now unfriendly toward them. They felt stranded and in danger. Nothing was left them but some desperate action, or—so they thought—the well-nigh equally desperate inaction.

Raikes had urged them to appoint him as the leader of a committee to visit Williams and find out what was likely to happen to them. I wondered what they were talking of by this time, and I tried to slip from Williams's presence.

With a gesture he kept me seated. It seemed a long, long time before he said anything. Then he looked up

and spoke as if he had suddenly remembered what he wanted to say. But I had doubts.

He remarked that I and Father Rinieri were friends; and could I imagine what the priest wanted to see him about——

He broke off.

Almost, if not quite, involuntarily I finished his sentence:

"—about her?"

"Why?"

The word was sharp, mandatory.

A little uneasily, but with something reckless vaguely stirring me, I said:

"Skipper, I'm likely to tell you the truth—then have to lie like the devil to make you think I was joking."

By his hard gaze he demanded that I go on.

I made the jump. I simply closed my eyes and flung my answer to him.

"Skipper, women go to priests to tell 'em the names of the men they hate, and why. They can't tell 'em why they love. Nobody knows that. But the other reason they go is to tell 'em who!"

Two hours later Williams was still in the house of the priest, across from him at the little table, with the yellow flame of the lamp burning between them. To me, waiting impatiently in the darkness, it seemed that much time went by when neither spoke, and even then I could not hear all that I wished to hear.

CHAPTER XIII

A ROPE'S END FALLS, SWISH—WHIR!

"THAT," I said to Hawkins in a mood to throw him overboard, "is Dakaru."

"That," he repeated with complacent stubbornness, taking his pipe in one hand and extending the other requestfully, "ain't nothin'. Just a cloud or somethin'."

We had the morning watch. The sun was peeping up and the sails were full.

"Think those boys there in the bow don't know land when they see it?"

I flung an indignant gesture at the Samoans who were staring at the faint low bluish mist-like form that touched the sea where sky and water met.

"Awright," he rumbled. "Give me that pouch. It's Dakaru." And having the pouch he added: "—If it ain't somethin' else!"

But it was Dakaru, and with ten Samoans headed by Malua and a half dozen white men—who rather imagined they would have something dreadful done to them any hour—with Dula and Davenant on board too, we were nearly at the long voyage's end.

We had left Lelela two days after Captain Lumholtz proudly went away with his cherished prisoner.

In those two days a few things perhaps worth mentioning had happened.

Malua had returned from Apia, empty-handed and furious.

At the feet of Taulemeito, before whom he poured out his story, he had brained the miserable Senva. And again at Williams's request a party of men hurried the Yankee missionaries off to the hills. Malua swore to club them to death. They had inspired Senva to treachery.

The American engineer at Apia, undoubtedly frightened and possibly truthful also, had said it was impossible to furnish dynamite. He had heard the report Senva gave out even before Malua learned it had been given out; and he conspired to hold Malua at Apia so he could not get away and give warning before the *Friedrich* had started.

He and his German employers might have held a large healthy conger eel much more easily than Malua, when that young chief discovered what was in the air. He did not even appreciate the joke that had been played on the gunboat. His temper was up.

And what had happened the night before he arrived home did not lessen his resentment against white men, all white men, who came overrunning the islands of his people, laying out plantations, feeding the natives rum and gewgaws, defiling the women, spreading disease and thrusting Bibles with the threat of hell-fire into their faces.

Strangely enough he did not think of Williams as a white man; but even face to face with the immobile serenity of Father Rinieri he had, with surprising bitterness for a Samoan, loosened his anger.

That night when I had waited so long outside of Father Rinieri's house I had not been eavesdropping. Of course I did not thrust my fingers into my ears or anything of the kind. But the little cockney, who had a

very great admiration for Hawkins, had searched him out and told him that Raikes and Davenant were cooking up some deviltry; and that he, Cockney George, wasn't "hidiot henough to try to tyke the wind hout hof 'Urricane Wylliams's syles."

No sir. George didn't have any love for Hurricane Williams. But he would be "bloomin' well blasted" if he didn't have too much sense to try to come anything over that fellow.

So I waited to give Williams what I had heard from Hawkins. At least that was the excuse I had given myself for remaining so long near Father Rinieri's door. I knew the crew felt miserable and in a mood to think they ought to do something, anything; but I really did not suppose that they would try to seize the ship.

What they expected to do with it after they got her I don't know. They had nothing to do but go on board. She was ready to sail—only she would have to be towed out, and by not less than a half dozen boatfuls of strong rowers.

But Davenant, it appeared, had told them of the rifles. Raikes, who alone knew something of ships, had talked foolish and gestured aside the difficulties.

Anyway they went on board and broke out the rifles.

Davenant had tried to get Dula to go on board too. What she told him I do not know. But one of the native girls who was present told me, though she understood scarcely a word of English, that the hairy-faced man had been very angry and tried to talk loud; and that Dula had been quiet and smiled. It was the native girl who had screamed when he raised his hand to strike her. And he went away.

Perhaps she had told Davenant much the same that

I overheard Father Rinieri tell to Williams. I did not hear much, though my ears grew about two inches from the strain; but I did catch the fact that Dula had withheld nothing—nothing—from Father Rinieri, and that she was more relieved, more at ease with herself, than had ever seemed possible to her. But Father Rinieri was not himself yet at ease over her.

However, that has nothing to do with the attempt to steal the *Sally Martin.* By the time I told Williams what was planned, the plan had been accomplished.

We did not know it then. The maneuver had been carried out with an effort at secrecy—only there is no such thing in a Samoan village. We knew it presently, for the village was in a hubbub.

But Williams said nothing. Not a word. I would not believe that myself if I had not stood by him, tagged after him, followed him, in eager expectancy to hear him snap a few words of orders, then go toward the beach and set out with boats for the ship. It seemed as if all the village had the same expectancy.

Williams went to the house Taulemeito had set apart for him. I followed. So did the village. The village squatted on the grass and in the shadows. I loitered in the doorway.

At last I demanded:

"Skipper, what you going to do about it?"

He stirred himself from moody reflections, but they had obviously not been on the *Sally Martin,* for he said bruskly, as if unwillingly recalled to something of scant importance:

"Do about it? Go aboard in the morning and put those men to work."

And he did.

In the most matter-of-fact way, shortly after dawn, he was rowed to the ship. Hawkins and I were with him in the same boat. The rail bristled with rifles menacingly laid across it.

Raikes, yelling at the top of his voice, warned us off. Davenant, cool, even a little polite, warned us off.

"Red-Top," said Hawkins, pretending to be—and perhaps not wholly pretending—a little anxious, "how's anybody goin' miss me? If I 's skinny like you——"

He broke off.

Raikes was crying that another stroke of the paddles would bring a volley.

The natives let the paddles trail and twisted anxious faces toward Williams.

He told them to row on.

Hawkins took a deep breath like a man about to plunge into cold water.

"Fire!" commanded the high, chill voice of Davenant.

We could see the expression of amazement on the faces above the rail. Not a rifle went off. Some of the men looked at their guns as if they had bewitched things in their hands, and peered, stupefied, at the unexploded shells.

I laughed, a bit hysterical perhaps, but none the less in merriment. I had forgotten that Williams, a capable gunsmith, who had often had rifles stolen from him, had removed the firing-pins. No wonder he cared very little how many men had gone on board and armed themselves.

The crew was flabbergasted, literally. They did not understand it. It savored of the devil, of real black wizardry.

What followed from Williams may have seemed to

them more devilish but without any wizardry in it. Whether what Williams soon proceeded to do was actually diabolical or was even stinted, inadequate justice, I do not know. No other man would have done it, at least in just the way that he did.

He shouted for the sea-ladder to be thrown over, and he was up it in a bound. The crew were a little awed and somewhat frightened.

He seemed to ignore their recent pitiable effort at mutiny. He turned his back on this man and that carelessly. Some of them still held rifles in their hands and could have clubbed him. But when he said to help Hawkins up they jumped to obey.

The Samoans scrambled on deck.

Upon the poop Davenant stood, absolutely trembling —no doubt with nervousness and anger and disappointment.

Williams looked up at him and snapped:

"Come here!"

Every face was upturned toward Davenant, waiting for what he would do—summonsed like that.

"You will please speak to me as to a gentleman!" he said.

His voice got away from him though. It was shriller than I had ever heard it. Davenant was shaken through and through.

Williams scarcely moved except to jerk his head to one side, and a score of words, not so many perhaps, crackled from his mouth. He spoke to the Samoans. I caught each word and weakly grasped at Hawkins and muttered, "My God!" as the Samoans streaked aft.

Davenant saw them coming and was alarmed. He backed away, but seemed incredulous that they would

presume to lay hands on him. They not only did lay hands on him, but they grasped him and roughly but not abusively hurried him down the ladder and into the waist.

He struggled and cried out, mad with a goaded sense of indignity—if not too with fear. He was no longer the chill, poised, enigmatic figure, hiding Sicilian passions under the shell of an Englishman. He raged venomously. Nothing was left him of dignity, of prestige—nothing was left him but flesh to feel pain.

When Williams sent the natives aft he had told them to bring Davenant there and bind him to the mast, arms encircling it.

And they did.

They stripped his coat from him, thrust him against the mainmast, pulled his arms around, tied each wrist, then brought each of the lines clear around both the mast and his body. They tied his legs vise-like too. He was helpless as if on a rack.

Williams took the long knife from his belt, cut an end from a half-inch rope and casually flicked the four feet of length as if testing it.

We were a group of amazed, even horrified, men. In our minds, at least, Davenant was the owner of the ship. But more than that he was a peer of England, a lord, the son and heir of a marquis.

But all that Williams said was, "Stand back," and we gave way. He tossed the line into the air and brought it down on Davenant's shoulder.

The man screamed. It was not pain. It was outrage. The blow did not break the skin of his back, but it cut through his heart.

Incredible as it is to say so, there was not a sign of

passion on Williams's face or in his manner. He was tense; the muscles of his neck stood out like large cords, and his eyes had the force of physical strength. But he was always tense, always strained, always seemingly at the point of fury.

Blow after blow came down. They stung, but he was not putting his weight to them. He was not beating the man's flesh so much as the man's spirit.

Davenant's cries were more like those of a beast than a man. His black beard was flecked with foam; his mouth white with it.

And there was no way of knowing whether Williams was paying punishment for the shot into his back as he slept, or for the late, abortive, senseless attempt to steal the ship—or for something else that had aroused his terrible sense of vengeance. There had been the long, patient devoted hours that Dula put in by his bed; and there had been the long hours that he sat across from Father Rinieri, that night before when I waited in the shadows.

There he had heard her story from the time the Sicilian countess came as a bride to England—the whole story, with its tragedies and bitterness, told with the solemn, dramatic, yet compassionate words of an old, wise man who knew the hearts of men and of women. As a priest, Father Rinieri had heard what she would not, could not, have told to another; but, having told, she gave permission, if she had not indeed made the request, that her story be given to Hurricane Williams.

Why a woman, when she loves, feels, and scarcely can ever resist, the urge to cast herself humbly, confessionally—whatever her disgrace—at the feet of the man, is something belonging to the inscrutable secrets of God

Himself. It seemed she had chosen to make her confession vicariously.

And perhaps those blows that fell on Davenant's back were the expression of what Williams felt and thought of the cruel, evil way in which Davenant had not only kept her fermented with hate against her father —kissing the knife with which she was to kill him— but had deliberately, malevolently, caused her to learn and endure other, and worse things.

He, a grown man when she was a child. He, the brother of her mother. But perhaps, too, there was something even more that surged within Williams—some response, some answer that would not be stilled, to her bold, unashamed love for him.

But that is all conjecture, no better than shooting at a target hidden from view. And I maunder on like an old woman at gossip. The fact is that Williams beat with a rope-end the body of Sir Francis Davenant for three or four minutes; then with two strokes of his knife cut him loose.

"I'll kill you! I'll kill you!" the man shrieked.

His arms were upraised, his fingers talon-like. The rope that had bound him still dangled from his wrists. He was weak from fury that had in frantic impotence burned up his own strength. He was not unlike a madman. For the time he was one. All the Sicilian hate and mania for revenge of which he was capable was wildly flaunted at Williams. Davenant was simply unrecognizable as the poised, chill, aloof man with the carefully combed black beard and disturbing, cynical white smile.

There was no plumbing Williams's mind. At least I could not. So, whether he really felt that whatever Davenant could threaten or do was nothing to notice, or

whether his appearance of not even hearing or seeing Davenant was deliberately assumed to make the man more sufferingly mad, is for those who feel they understand to guess at.

He turned from Davenant and spoke to the crew. It was their turn. And they jumped to the dirty, hard work he ordered, jumped for flush-pots and tar-buckets. They moved with a will. One might have thought there was a big money-prize dangling before their fingers.

Davenant saw his chance. He swooped at the deck, snatched a rifle and swung it. I shouted; Hawkins shouted. The Samoans nearest him lurched forward—too late.

But Williams did not carry his life in his hand without knowing pretty well what went on behind him. I believe that he sensed that coming blow through some faculty developed by years of strain and watchfulness. I believe that, only because I can't believe that he saw it.

Anyway he expected it, and all the while must have been poised to wheel. He did. His hand shot out and up, caught the descending gun at the barrel, wrenched it from Davenant's grip, flung it to the deck—and he simply turned his back again.

Davenant looked at him, just stared in a kind of stupid daze; and then—no doubt unconsciously—he made the sign of the cross on his breast. Silently he went aft; went to his room. He had not been seen out of it since.

The Samoans that came on board with Williams remained. White men were under native eyes. They became the crew. Not those men, or not all of them; but others came to take their place.

Malua came with a half dozen eager to follow Williams over the world. Why? He would lead them

into trouble. He told, and made them understand, hemp or at least prison awaited them if he should be caught.

They came eagerly. Not for his money or trade or for anything that could be bought with money. Why? I do not know; and I have often wondered. Perhaps it is because men, no matter what their color, follow the intrepid ones. Perhaps it was because Williams never broke a promise to them. He never broke his promise to any man. A simple way to get rid of Williams from the high seas would have been through getting him to agree to go to Sydney and stick his head through the noose. He would have gone. Indeed, he would have gone.

He made lots of promises and he kept all. He went to Sydney once to keep a promise with a brute of an old captain—and stole that skipper's brig under the eyes of the forts. And he wrecked it, as he promised he would if that thief did not split fairly on the cargo of very fine shell that Williams had gathered but could not take into port himself.

Too, he had promised to take Davenant and the woman to Dakaru; and he was taking them.

I do not think that Dula wanted to go except with the ship. I mean that I imagined she did not particularly care whether the ship went to Dakaru or Denmark; but wherever it went she wanted to go.

I guessed that she was not eager to go to Dakaru because Father Rinieri came on board with her and the native woman, Laulai; and he would not have come on board to give his parting blessing unless he knew that her first urge for going to Dakaru had vanished. He remained with us until the ship was towed to the outer reefs; then a boat came alongside for him.

Dula—I was watching closely—held his hand for

seconds at parting. Her face had a strange mildness that turned into a smile as she said good-by. What they said I do not know, for their talk was in a language of which I understood nothing. I helped him down the poop ladder. He walked very slowly.

"Father," I said, "if you don't think it'll make the Lord angry with you, you might mention my name to Him. You know, I'm not bad as He must think, since He only hears o' me from other missionaries."

He looked at me questioningly, quietly. I was perhaps irreverent, but I was not insincere.

"I've been to Dakaru before. And, Father, the crust 'tween it and hell's mighty thin!"

And he answered with something I have often thought on, and wondered at his understanding of men, of wicked men like myself. "Dan, Dan," he smiled, "I'm afraid I'll be of most service to you twenty years from now—when you remember me."

A prophetic benediction. I never saw him again, but the memory of him and his wise goodness has not left me.

Williams was waiting to help him down the sea-ladder, and in parting Father Rinieri said something to him that I did not understand, and I do not think I have ever understood.

"Captain Williams, I shall always consider it an honor to have known you."

And I had enough already to think on without cudgeling my head half the night wondering what Father Rinieri could have meant by that. He had seen Williams several times during the past years and hardly spoken with him. Perhaps Williams, too, had made a confessional across that lamp-lit table; or perhaps that wise old priest had looked deep through Williams's silence and

understood the man as no one else did. I do not know. There are so many things I don't know, and for one as curious as I it's often fretful and increases sleeplessness.

One thing was clear, however: Father Rinieri would not have considered it an honor a week before to have known Williams.

Dula had Laulai, a Samoan woman, as a companion. Laulai could speak a little English. When a girl she had married an Englishman and lived with him for ten years. He had made money in trade and gone back home to spend it on white women. She never saw him again.

It was Laulai who told me with that free sense of criticism that women have—particularly native women after they have learned impudence from white husbands—that she did not think Williams was such a fine man. He had sent Red Shaylor away for Germans to hang him. Williams should have killed him outright.

Had anybody annoyed the wives of Taulemeito and lived? Could any man grab a woman in the shadows that loved Malua, and not die? Williams was a great *alii,* brother of the chief; but he was no *tausea,* no protector.

Laulai was taking it for granted that I and every one else knew of what she was talking. Apparently she was talking of many things, or at least two or three.

I was a fool, she said. Samoan ladies are outspoken. Did I not know that the beautiful woman had been fearful of the *lima toto* man—the red, the bloody-handed Shaylor? Did I not know that there had been cause? She was afraid too of the black-haired man. Why hadn't Williams settled with the one and with the other, too? Gave one to the Germans. Whipped the other with a little string. Bah! She, Laulai, had heard that he was a man.

I recalled how Dula had on the ship seemed to sense the wisdom of avoiding Red Shaylor, even though the alternative was to make a companion of me; and how he had blustered before her and looked at her from a distance. Word by word I pried from Laulai that Shaylor had been objectionable in the village.

Though she was sworn to secrecy, the oath was not what made it so difficult to get information out of her. Woman-like, she wanted to express her opinion instead of tell facts.

It had got so that Dula could not walk out in the evening without Shaylor waylaying her. Once he had grabbed her, perhaps thinking that Dula was alone, when she had walked on from two or three of the girls who stopped to gossip with somebody. Dula had made the girls promise to say nothing about it, and by some miracle they seemed to have done so.

"Well," I reflected, "Red Shaylor is gone. Probably the Fates are patching up the hole that Williams tore in their design when the *Roanoke* went down. Or maybe they really didn't want him to die then. There is no more telling about the Fates than about any other woman —they all get a man into trouble."

And Dula had me into trouble before we were two days out.

She came to me early one morning when she should have been trying to sleep. I was. The wheel was lashed, and I was sprawled on the skylight. Malua had the deck, and he was in the waist hobnobbing with the watch.

The details are needless. Dula had not spoken to me for two weeks. For one thing I had kept out of her way. To be unable to keep her face out of my mind was disturbing enough without coming closer.

She came up as if we had parted but an hour ago, the best of friends. I mean that without any explanation at all for the chilliness she had radiated toward me, without any apology or expectation of one, she came and sat down on the skylight beside me when I sat up. She had a favor to ask, of course.

She called me Dan. But then all the other women in the village did, or tried to—usually said "Lan"; there is no "d" in their language—so perhaps Dula came by it unconsciously. But somehow to hear her say it was not, for instance, like when Laulai said it.

"Why have you tried so hard to stay away from me, Dan?" she asked.

I don't know what I wanted to say. Certainly something different from what I did say. What I did say was of no importance. Something vague about having been working hard, very hard.

She smiled. It was a real smile with nothing reserved in it. She smiled receptively, as if any explanation would have done as well. I doubt if she heard what I said, for she asked at once with a little stir of eagerness if I had told Williams how Tom Gibson had met death.

"After being bribed to silence with so much jewelry?" I was a little hurt. I don't know what by; but I felt hurt anyway.

"Please do," she said quickly, leaning toward me.

Her dark face with its strange irregular lines was close to mine. Her thick hair was matted down and covered her ears. Her eyes were earnest, pleading.

"You will, won't you?" she added.

"You tell him. He'll be interested. Very. Williams likes to hear things."

"Please do, Dan."

"Father Rinieri—didn't you tell him?"

"Dan—" there was a little note of pleading impatience. "Father Rinieri is a priest."

"And Williams is a pirate. It won't shock him either."

"Please, I am in earnest! I want him to know. I can't tell him. Don't you see I can't?"

"Why didn't Father Rinieri tell him?"

"Repeat a confession!' she exclaimed with a low overtone of horror.

I said that I had heard him tell.

"You listened!" Dula hardened a little in an instant.

It seemed that I was guilty of something terrible. But I was stubbornly shameless; so much so that she seemed a little confused. Anyway she explained that what Father Rinieri had had confided with him was something separate and apart from the confessional. That being a differentiation I did not understand or care anything about.

The point was that she wanted Williams to know it was not only her knife but her hand that had struck poor inoffensive Gibson. She had thought it over. She now wanted him to know.

Something internally goaded me, and I said:

"You want Williams to know you did it for him. Your story told by even Father Rinieri hasn't moved him as you thought it would. Is that it? You love him, don't you? You went in a passion over that word love once, but it's different now—isn't it? You were afraid he would be horrified if he knew about Gibson, so you wouldn't let him know that. Now you want me to tell him. If he is horrified you can say I lied!"

She struck me across the face with her palm. She said: "You are a beast!"

And she left me.

However, I did what she wanted. I did tell Williams everything—down to the palm-blow in the face.

He looked at me hard with anger gathering in his eyes. I had known that all the time and said nothing? He thought that I was his friend, not the confederate of any strange woman that happened to be on his ship.

"But she did it for you!" I cried, involuntarily pleading for her in an uneasy effort to justify myself.

"And you did it for her!" he said. "You love her, McGuire. I knew that from the first. The thing called love makes strange fools."

I denied it with might and main, with outpoured oaths and hard-flung gestures.

He said something about an innocent man never overemphasizing his plea.

"Good God!" I cried; "then do you love her?"

A thin crooked smile hung itself on his lips. Motionless, he looked at me, fire in his eyes, and a cryptic, twisted line on his hard mouth.

I could say nothing more; and he gave no answer except what I chose to read in the anger of his eyes and the crooked smile that may have been sardonic or may have been confessional. I do not know.

So on we went day after day, as miserable a boatload as ever ruffled the sea. I wished with embittered futility that I had at no time kept anything back from Williams. Hawkins became my solace and companion, though there were times when I hated his big fat bellying body, his heavy rumbling voice. But I talked with him; told him much—and much I didn't tell.

"Cheer-up, Red-Top; cheer-o. We're rollin' down to Dakaru. Lots o' drink there, old mate. An' eat—oh! What's that you said oncet? Blood'll be splashed to the moon. Funny, wasn't it? Carp Taylor's the man this Lord Davenant o' ourn hired to take 'im to Dakaru.

"Taylor split my head an' walloped me 'cross the hatch. Beat up an unconscious fellow—me! An' Davenant got his floggin' wide awake. Raulson says he's never seen his face—just shoves the tucker through the door. Sometimes it ain't touched——

"Say, little Raikes is scared frozen. Says he was drunk at Lelela—didn't want to steal the ship. He ain't through pesterin' me yet t' b'lieve he done me a favor that day on the fo'c's'le. Maybe he did, Red-Top. Maybe he did.

"The whole pack o' the men are scared as Raikes that Williams'll turn the natives loose on 'em. 'Cept Cockney George. He keeps at me to know 'ow 'e 'll be rewarded.

"Say, I glimpsed a native sharpenin' Williams's knife. What does that mean, Red-Top?"

I told him for heaven's sake to stop that interminable chatter; that his tongue was long as a bowsprit, his mouth empty as a rat-eaten cheese. All that nonsense when there were important things to worry about! The world had shifted from its foundation, and everything was topsyturvy.

What did I mean? Listen: That woman was a trouble-maker. She was after Williams. No, it would have been simple if she had merely wanted to kill him. But she wanted him to love her—and she looked just like the woman that had had him hanged. And he had loved that one.

Ought to make him hate this one? Of course it ought. But what man does as he should?

"And how many women could you hate that looked like the first one you loved? And she hasn't worn that black coat with red lining—not since Williams was shot. What has that to do with it? Lots— only I don't know in what way. She is like that; black on the surface and crimsonly passionate inside of her. She has flung herself at him, Hawkins. Flung herself at him! And I'm not sure she hasn't brought him to her moorings! Think of it, man! She came out here to kill her father—her own blood-father. And love was stronger than the hate that was put into her in the nursery. She thinks it was the priest that moved her—but it was Williams. It was Williams, I tell you. And look at him, Hawkins. He's not like you and me. He hates the very sight of drunken beach-combers like you and me. But he'd wade through blood neck-deep to pull either one of us out—because he thinks it would be right. Right? Right! What is right? Maybe it tells in some of those queer books he reads.

"Do you know why he's coming here? It's to give back this ship to Grahame for the one we stole when we were here before! Some more of that damn right of his. The same as when he wrecks blackbirders and sets natives loose—likely enough to murder the next white men that come! He does that; and yet—have you ever seen him kill? *Pouf—Pouf—Pouf* with knife or gun. And never a quiver—no more than if he was spearing fish! Aye, he's been hanged himself, so probably he knows how little life is worth. No, you fool, I'm not drunk! I'm sober—that's what's the matter with me!"

. . . . And the next morning we raised Dakaru.

CHAPTER XIV

FEVER, RUM AND A BITTER TALE

WE WERE sighted from afar by the people at Dakaru, and a boat met us at the mouth of the narrow little bay entrance.

A Portuguese was in the boat with many natives, velvety black fellows from Western Melanesia.

He called out ill-temperedly in broken English to know who we were and what we wanted. From our stern through cupped hands a quick loud roar of Hawkins:

"Hurricane Williams!"

The Portuguese stayed not to learn more. That boat started off for the shore, and we could hear him cursing the rowers for their slowness.

We came in almost motionless. The wind was dead. We rode with the tide and scarcely drifted. The sails were down.

So close inside as almost to block the entrance—but not actually to block it—we let go an anchor.

There were two ships in the harbor besides the *Sally Martin.* One was a little clipper-like craft moored off the landing. That was Grahame's. The other was a tub of a brig. With almost inaudible surprise Hawkins identified her as the *Fijian Maid*—Carp Taylor's ship.

The anchor was hardly down before a small boat hit the water; Malua and a half dozen natives jumped down

into it, and Williams shoved a piece of folded paper into my hand.

"For Grahame," he said, and pointed across the bay.

All that hurry left me dazed. I was into the boat and being rowed off before I was hardly aware of having started.

Dakaru had been roughly sketched in lines of beauty by the Great Landscape Gardener that laid out His many Edens in the South Seas; and for years Grahame had been using up ship-loads of blacks in improvements. He did not run his plantation for money, but threw the profits away. Isolation suited him better than commerce.

He had a lugger or two on the other end of the island, and he raked the bottom of a large virgin atoll for pearl and shell. This paid his expenses and gave him the name of being rich. A queer life, a queer character; but something centrifugal in the northern, civilized lands seemed to have thrown out the men of queer, grotesque minds and purposes, and they landed in those seas.

The paper Williams gave me was not sealed. So I read it. I would probably have read it any way.

GRAHAME:

I have brought you back a ship. I shall have to take her out again to get away. Put your own crew on her and they can bring her back. She is yours.

I have two passengers for Dakaru, but one may not want to stay. You may not want the other to leave. Let me have an answer at once. WILLIAMS.

I reflected on that note. I almost grinned at the irony of Williams satisfying his curious sense of honor by returning at Dakaru a ship he had stolen at Turkee.

But it had ever been so. He could not escape such irony, and probably saw it, felt it, much as any man. Good people have a hard enough time doing what they think is right; but an outlaw—he rides the horns of dilemma.

"Two passengers." The one that might not want to stay was surely the woman. "You may not want the other to leave"; that was sardonic.

Had Williams, so strangely faithful to his promise, brought Davenant all the way to Dakaru expecting Grahame would kill him? Perhaps there was at once punishment for Davenant and a favor to Grahame in that. Williams had a grim sense of justice.

The boat swept on rapidly toward the landing. Many people were waiting there. Some had rifles in their hands. Overhead gulls swirled, crying harshly. I heard the deep bay of a dog, and saw two among the group on the beach.

Malua shouted. The rowers lifted their oars. The boat streaked rapidly broadside to the landing, and the boys grappled with its coral wall, bringing blood through the scratches on their hands but holding the boat.

I got out slowly, going up the slimy landing-steps, and faced a squat little black Portuguese armed to his chin, and a whip in his hand. He was not alone. Two other dirty-looking Portuguese were with him. Their clothes were clean enough but they looked dirty anyway.

"——, w'at you want?" he demanded overbearingly.

I glanced searchingly along the landing. A white man was there, but it wasn't Grahame. This man had a beard; and Grahame was taller than he. Black boys and women were there, huddled curiously, sensing in their marvelous way that trouble was in the air.

"Grahame," I said.

"No see him."

The dirty squat man was trying to be mean in the way he spoke.

I started forward. He blocked my way.

My hair isn't red for nothing, and I never was likely to be intimidated in daylight by Portuguese. At night when any shadow may hold a knife—that is different. Besides Williams through his glasses was probably watching me.

I pointed to the boat where Malua and the boys stood with heads and shoulders above the landing, watching.

"Get out of my way. Get out, or those Samoans'll come up here. And there won't be enough Portuguese left to show your own blacks where to bury you!"

They gave way; whether because of my valiant words, or because the heavy hand of the white man who had approached seemed about to jerk the other two aside, I do not know. He roughly pushed one out of his way and faced me.

"What d'you want?" he said unpleasantly.

"I've a message for Grahame," I told him and made a movement with the hand that held the folded paper.

"Give it to me," and he reached for it.

"Who are you?"

"What does that——"—he referred to Williams with the use of many words that must be left to the imagination, though the imagination of most people will be unable to supply them— "——want here?" Adding: "I'm Carpenter Taylor. He'd better go about with the tide an' get to hell out of here. What'd you want with Grahame?"

"Supposin' you go out and tell him all that. I'm not

much good at delivering messages—unless they're written. Like this one. Where is Grahame?"

"Give it to me. Grahame's a sick man."

Again he reached for the paper.

He was a broad-shouldered, short-legged man, with a short, tobacco-smeared beard and a thick nose.

"Listen to my words of wisdom, Captain Taylor. Unless I put this in Grahame's own hands Hurricane Williams himself'll come ashore an' do it. And he hasn't changed much since you last met him—an' put your blacks back on the beach!"

There was a sting in that phrase, and it jabbed Carp Taylor where he had a sore memory.

He wished that dog Williams would come ashore. He'd find it different at Dakaru now. The damn thief. Just let him set his feet on the sands——

"I think I can deliver that message all right—but this one first."

"Are you fellows here after trouble?" he demanded, his thick arms bristling from his sides.

He probably felt the security of numbers, the Portuguese, the dogs, the high wall, fort-like, about the house; and with those odds on his side he was ready to fight.

"You're talking to the wrong man, Captain. You want to go out and speak to Williams. He can tell you. I can't."

More words equally futile and uninteresting passed between us; then he decided to lead me to Grahame.

We went up the white sanded roadway lined with slabs of coral and along the coral were planted roses. Half a ship-load, so I had heard, of clay soil had been brought up from Australia to bed roses. The grilled

iron gates of the eight-foot wall were closed but unlocked.

On every side were the marks of long, hard work from human hands. Grahame had used up his blacks much as the old kings of Egypt had used up their *fellaheen.* Inside of the walls were masses of flowers and trees and stretches of green lawn: jasmine, hibiscus, trumpet-flowers, acacia, and great flame-tipped poinsettia, the sweet wild-orange and enormous shrubs sagging under the weight of bright-winged blossoms. Cockatoos fluttered drowsily in the shadows of fig-trees and complained irritably.

The house—a mile from the beach—was a low, great-flanked structure based with coral mortar and breasted with vines that reached over and festooned the low broad veranda, burying it in cool shadows. The big wide door of carved oak had been sent out from England.

"Fever," Carp Taylor had explained, significantly jerking a thick hand toward the house, and adding:

"Some men can't drink—in this climate."

As we trudged along, the sand grinding under his shoes—I was barefoot—he spoke of what was uppermost in his mind:

"What d'you fellows want here anyhow?"

And again without waiting for an answer he added:

"I'm in charge here—since Grahame's sick."

He looked at me; and I thought there was something queer in his eyes, something like hope, great expectations lurking there a little furtively. Well, it was a rich plantation; and if Grahame died who would get it? The first man to claim it.

There was the girl, the bright-haired little angel that had got down from the Florentine wall where some old

Italian artist had 'prisoned her, and wandered to Dakaru —but what was a girl-child between a man and his loot?

He stopped on the veranda with his hand at the door to come back to his question. He asked it with a strained effort at friendliness, confidence-inviting, as if he had been thinking things over and did not want trouble. Perhaps he would seek for the soft answer to turn away Williams. What did we want, anyway?

I answered with reasonable truth in saying I did not know, that I sailed with Hurricane Williams and inquired not at all into his business.

He stared at me for a moment or two. His eyes were dull, but a cunning light was at the back of them. There was something thick and clod-like about the man, even to his eyes, and tongue too. He took a nubbin of tobacco from his trousers pocket, bit into it, worked his jaws and said:

"Grahame's queer. I'm warnin' you. Fever—an' rum."

We went in.

The door swung back noiselessly. Though it was dark and cool inside, and for a few seconds I could scarcely distinguish anything, I had the impression of forms vanishing. There was certainly the soft *plop-plop* of light bare feet in the distance.

"Black girls," said Carp Taylor. "Grahame coddles 'em. Kills his natives out there—but here——"

He laughed low, coarsely.

"Don't want that girl o' his'n to know he'd hurt a fly!"

He laughed again. It was if not humorous at least queer.

As I rapidly grew used to the dimness I saw that

we had entered not into a room but into a wide hall with great open doors on either side. On the right I caught a glimpse of rows of books and chairs. We passed on down the mat-covered hall.

Taylor opened a door. A native woman, having heard us, was at the same time opening the door.

Grahame lay on a great wide bed. Everything was spacious in that house. By the bed was a teak table. Its three legs in the form of slender dragons' bodies ran to above the edge of the table and became little black savage monsters, watchfully leering about the room.

On the table was a glass, a bowl of sugar, a few limes, sliced, and a bottle of rum. Wretched medicine for fever.

Grahame raised himself on his pillows and stared forward. He was thin, wasted. His long mustache was now scarcely more than streaked with black and drooped far below his chin dispiritedly. His hair had thinned and was long and white.

The native woman effacedly, patiently, stood to one side of the large open window, through which I caught a glimpse of a peering child. He saw me look at him and at once began to pull a long rope, and a breath of air stirred down from the ceiling from a *punkah*.

On the other side of the bed from me sat the girl, the girl of the bright hair, her elbows on the bed and her slender hands almost invisible against the covering of pure white *tappa* cloth. A large pearl, like a miniature harvest moon in a faint mist, was on a finger.

But she was a girl no longer; the tropics rush flowers, fruit and maidens to their ripening overnight; and men to seed. She was yet sweet and innocent and inexpressibly weary, pale, and under her eyes were faint bluish

rings. She recognized me at once, and fright coiled in her purple eyes.

Grahame, though weak, spoke savagely, hoarsely.

"You come from that pig-born Williams?"

The English think they know a viler phrase than "pig-born"; but the South Seas know none. Perhaps with vicious subtlety he took the lowest word of the Samoans, among whom Williams was the brother of a chief.

"I have a message," I said, and held out my hand.

He looked at the paper, then at me, and took it with an air of distrustfulness. His hands were nervous and shook. His fingers fumbled in opening it.

With difficulty he read; it took him a long time. So long in fact that he did not notice Carp Taylor, who had leaned downward and read too. When Grahame looked up toward me in surprise, and seeing Taylor near, turned the paper face down on the bed coverlet, he concealed nothing.

"Father, may I?" the girl asked, her thin, almost transparent, fingers moving toward the paper.

"No, no," he said a little uneasily, pulling it away.

Silence, except for the slow and scarcely audible weaving of the *punkah* overhead and the faint crackle of the paper as Grahame with something like an air of furtiveness again read the message.

"Go out, go out," he said abruptly, nervously. "All of you go out. Taylor, get out. Eunice, I want to talk to him."

He glanced again at the paper.

"I'm all right."

Eunice stood up slowly and gave me a long steady

look of reproach. She spoke, and though her voice expressed an unforgiving bitterness it was soft and sweet.

"My father has never been well since that day," she said. Then impulsively: "Oh, what do you terrible men want now? Come, Nolopu."

Carp Taylor said something about himself being there to look after her and her father. But she seemed not to hear him; more than that, seemed to ignore him, though he came close to her.

I glanced scrutinizingly at the native woman. Nolopu was a Samoan name. She was a Samoan too. She did not look toward me as she went out after Taylor and the girl.

Two hours later there were three emptied bottles of rum on the table of the dragons, and I was cold, coldly sober. My hands shook a little and my heart shivered.

Grahame—Grahame was drunk, drunk and dying. He hated death terribly, fought against it, vowed he could and would rise and walk to-morrow; that he could do so that day, that hour. He needed the rest, he said; but it didn't hurt him to talk.

He said death was months off. He hated it; but he was not afraid—except for the girl, for Eunice. Eunice had been the name of her mother.

It wasn't the knife that had gone into his shoulder. Damn Hurricane Williams—but drink to him again! It was his liver; too much rum. And his heart—the—— thing wabbled and sometimes tried to stop.

The first thing he had demanded as the door closed was to know who were those people that we had brought to Dakaru. I told him. His curses were frightful. They fell on the head of Francis Davenant.

It was a long time before he mentioned Dula, his

daughter; then he asked what she was like, what she looked like. I can not say there was tenderness or anything akin to it, but there was no bitterness. He did not curse her.

"Williams has brought him here to hound me!" he had cried with uplifted, clenched fists.

I told of the shot into Williams's back; of Davenant lashed to the mast and beaten. Grahame laughed wickedly. He knew how that had hurt, gone deep, eaten in like the scalding of molten iron.

Then he had thrust the bottle toward me, saying:

"Drink!"

Grahame's thoughts went helter-skelter; but his tongue never stopped. When he seemed to be taking thought of what next to say his tongue mechanically cursed, and himself not least.

Such a life as had seemed ahead of him in his youth! He had been one of the youngest captains in the British Army—cavalry—and had won medals in India.

That sister of the hell-hound Davenant—he had lost his head over her. She was a woman that made a man's flesh burn! Fierce, passionate, jealous—and grew to hate him.

What could a young fool do with a woman like that, who believed her brother's lies—when he didn't even know there had been lies? Thought it was a wild woman's jealousy. Wondered in his bed if he would awaken with a knife in his throat. Of course he floated his troubles in wine!

Davenant, cold, poised, insistently friendly, idled neither day nor night from the work of ruining him. The cause? God knew, perhaps.

There were clubs and messes where not even the son

of a marquis was welcome. Grahame would not try to take him into them.

Rumors of a kind never told except in whispers went from mouth to mouth with his name. Once a friend pointedly insulted Davenant, and Grahame kept the friend still.

Nor could he shake Davenant off. The wife loved the brother. The door was always open. Davenant, cold, inscrutable, seemed friendly. There was no shaking him off.

Fellow officers in Captain Grahame's quarters for an evening's sport found themselves playing with marked cards. There was nothing to do but what he did. Resign.

He thought his wild wife had revenged her jealousies. A bitter quarrel—and Davenant gave him sympathy. Grahame, himself slipping out of his caste and class, his own name going about in whispers, began to lean on Davenant's friendship.

All friends and family shunned him except a cousin, Eunice, an angel. They had loved, but cousins may not marry. It is wicked. He had forgotten the love a little; let it bury itself. She had kept it burning like a secret flame.

Then came a murder. The friend who had insulted Davenant, who had been one of those about the table of the marked cards, when by evil fortune Grahame was winning, was dead. Shot in the back.

Davenant had said:

"Looks bad, Grahame. If you were going to do a thing like that you shouldn't have talked about it beforehand, drunk."

Grahame had protested, shaken, fearful. He had

loved that friend, and he began to feel the Satanic patience and deadliness of Davenant.

"Yes, you did," Davenant answered with his slow, cold, white smile. "I could swear to it myself. My sister would too—to punish you for what she thinks is worse guilt. Other women."

Grahame had none in all the world to listen to him but the cousin who loved him. He snatched desperately right and left for what funds he could get. He took money that belonged to his wife and to Davenant, too. But he left property.

Fear of Davenant had got into his blood. He feared nothing else. Not even God. The implacable patience of the man was terrifying. Grahame had cursed himself for cowardice, but he had trembled in the belief that Davenant would search him out.

Much wandering found Dakaru. Luck gave him pearls. Nothing could be more remote, more secure; but he needed labor, and he had had blackbirders, who occasionally touched there in combing the seas, bring blacks.

A daughter was born again unto him. It was as if Heaven were to give him a whole new start, and an Eden too. They were happy and treated the blacks like children. He got Samoan girls to watch over his daughter, the kindest and most intelligent of natives.

Then the terrible thing happened—the cannibal feast. He had been at the atoll for pearls. The Samoans had hidden in the hills with the baby.

Every black on the island, male and female, had been butchered, hunted down. He and his Portuguese did it. But he had to have blacks to work the island. He got others, and bloodhounds, and more Portuguese.

"The cruelest of all whites as a race," he said.

He stayed on Dakaru, for there was no place to go. Besides there was pleasure in killing blacks where they had killed her. He fed them—for food went to waste; he housed them—for he wanted their strength to fail under burdens, not under disease; and he built his plantation, his gardens, his house and his roads and his walls, as a monument to Eunice his wife, as an inheritance for Eunice her daughter.

He had to traffic with England, for no luxuries were to be denied her; and somehow Davenant had heard of and reached Carp Taylor, who carried supplies and orders for Dakaru. With pearls and threats Grahame had made Carp Taylor refuse to meet Davenant as promised.

Grahame was no longer afraid of Davenant. He feared nothing except what would happen to Eunice when he died. There was nobody on earth to trust.

Look at Carp Taylor, now. The beast, with his eyes looking forward across Grahame's grave.

Rum was killing him. But rum he had to have. Memories would kill him quicker if he didn't have it.

And Carp Taylor was all that would stand between her and the Portuguese.

Not one man on earth to trust. Not one whose oath was better than his lies.

A British man-o'-war had been in a year ago, and Grahame had fruitlessly begged the captain to raise the flag on the island. Grahame had not been as sick then. He thought the end of life was years ahead.

He ought to have sent her to England. To have gone himself. Dared everybody—been hanged as a murderer if necessary.

But she believed him a great and noble man. When

shots were fired and lagging blacks fell she thought pigs or chickens were being killed.

She was all he had in life; and in eternity God wouldn't so much as let him see her from hell; he had kept her so innocent, so like her mother, that she would be too high in Heaven for his eyes to reach.

Hurricane Williams—the nigger-lover; Grahame had abhorred his name for years. Officers from wandering gunboats spoke it. Blackbirders told of his hideous friendship with cannibal blacks. Even stray whalers had heard it and cursed it; for blacks armed with rifles that were said to have come from Williams fought them off at times when they landed for water, food—and women.

However, the British captain there about a year ago—who did not dare raise his flag because at that time the politicians in the Colonial Office did not like the study of geography, and evaded it by calling themselves anti-imperialists—seemed to know more about Williams than other people had known. Was it true—Grahame demanded of me, that he had been hanged—and through the lies of a fierce, beautiful, dark woman? Actually hanged? Cut down unconscious by an impatient doctor late to his dinner-party? Saved by convicts who rolled a dummy in quicklime and buried it?

That captain had said:

"He's a dangerous man, you know. He kills quick. I've poked about among the trustworthiest reports of the blighter. Doesn't seem to care how or how many if they get him going. But take it long and short he doesn't seem to have potted many that the queen wouldn't have paid the hangman for the crackin' of their necks—if the Crown had caught 'em with all the evidence. And a lot o' them have been natives."

And to me Grahame said a little incredulous, mystified, unready to believe what the facts suggested, but putting them straight:

"When he left Dakaru that time there were two dead cannibals inside the wall—where it's always death for any of those blacks to be. Eunice and the women saw him kill them. He tried to kill me—but he— You were with him, and did he do it to protect her?"

I nodded.

"Then, curse him, we'll drink to his health. Get out another bottle from that chest.

"Carp Taylor and all of 'em think I'm rich. But it's all in that chest. Rum! And in the atoll—pearls, unfished."

He laughed sardonically in a kind of malicious glee. More soberly:

"That ring that Eunice wears—it was one of the first I found. Her mother used to wear it. I'd cut my heart out and sell it first."

I brought a third bottle from the chest. His hand shook so that more was spilled, far more, than went into the glass; and the glass was filled.

His wavering hand held the bottle out to me. I took it. He picked up the glass and from his trembling the liquor fell in little unheeded splashes over the brim, wetting the white coverlet, staining it more and more with deep brown spots.

"Here's to——"

He stopped, put down the glass awkwardly, drunkenly, and fumbled about for the paper Williams had sent. He found it, laboriously opened it. His fingers could not hold it steady; and the lines would not remain in place before his eyes. He thrust it at me.

"The first line—read that. Then we'll drink. Curse him, he's a man! I don't want his ship. He can have it. He can have all the ships I've got. The yacht, the luggers, all of 'em. He kills niggers, too, does he? Does he? —— Damn you, answer me! Then we'll drink to 'im! Curse him, he writes like a gentleman. Is he? Is he?

"Oh, these rotten tropics! Doesn't he drink? Then we'll drink to 'im more 'an ever!"

Grahame was more than drunk. I was more than sober. I was cold. There was the mark on him of one toward whom Death's invisible hand is outstretched.

The name of Davenant had smitten his memories given tinder to his fever; and the rum had unleashed the cords of his tongue. Time had struck two hours from the life of each of us.

Then the door opened. Carp Taylor, followed by Davenant, Dula, Eunice, came in.

CHAPTER XV

THE WOMAN WHO HATED MEN SPEAKS OF LOVE

CARP TAYLOR had sent a false message to Williams and had had the two passengers, who he guessed were Francis Davenant and his "daughter"—known to him as relatives whom Grahame, jealous of his isolation, did not want to see—brought ashore.

Perhaps Carp Taylor, with an itch for deviltry, didn't himself quite know what he was up to; though in also sending word to Williams that I was helping pick a crew that would go out with the ship and bring her back, there was probably at the back of his head the vague idea of rushing natives and Portuguese on board in the guise of a crew and seizing her, evening an old score, getting reward-money and renown, and also control of a valuable schooner.

There appears to be a kind of masonry among the devil's disciples that plunges them even when strangers into sullen fellowship and plot-weaving. When Davenant stepped on the landing he shook a fist at the *Sally Martin* and cursed Williams. In some moments then of quick speech, questions and answers, Davenant and Carp Taylor were in agreement as to what should happen to Williams.

Davenant's fury at him seemed to have displaced, for the time at least, revenge toward Grahame, whom he had sought half-way across the world.

As they came into the room I tried to stand up, with my face twisted back over my shoulder. My knees were limber and my feet heavy—from sitting so long, probably.

I threw out a steadying, groping hand and touched Davenant. He did not notice; he, almost madly, was already talking. But I jerked my hand back with the shuddering impression of having touched something snaky. Gripping the foot of Grahame's bed, I stood there, holding on tightly.

Dula and Eunice—distinct as figures from a tableau of Night and Day—were side by side. Eunice trembled and on her face was a frozen look of fearfulness. She was frightened but baffled too.

The evil that the world has in it was abruptly appearing before her. She did not understand, but she was afraid; also dazed by many surprising things. She held on to Dula's arm, and Dula's fingers were pressed reassuringly against the fragile hand that held her arm.

Eunice had met them at the door. Carp Taylor had tried to make some kind of introduction—something awkward about being "relatives"—and Dula had glided forward with hands out, saying:

"I am your sister!"

Laulai had at first thought Eunice was a woman with no tongue, one that couldn't speak. She was so silent.

Eunice did not believe it, of course; or more likely did not think of disbelieving it, of taking it literally. Her utter loneliness of life would have made any woman of her own race endearingly welcome and given her the dazed impression of the miraculous.

It would probably never have occurred to her to follow the men into her father's room. But she followed Dula. She knew, perhaps psychically, that Dula was

strong and wise. For all of the forced blooming of the tropics, Eunice was little more than a child, and a handful of dirt spread out on an oceanic mountain had been her world. When a woman is utterly innocent she has little left besides the urge to be loved, guided, sheltered, and an eagerness to trust.

Dula stood there alert, tense, her eyes on Grahame in a fascinated sort of way—her whole being concentrated in a kind of agonized suspense as to what he would reply to Davenant. And as I remember her through the shifting haze that clings to that room her attitude was not that of some one awaiting a decision so much as that of some one withholding judgment.

Davenant, as he came into the room, with a sweep of his hand had seemed to discard all the hate between him and Grahame. At least that was his offer in words as he cut interruptingly through the awkward effort at some kind of explanation begun by Carp Taylor.

Williams was to be caught and Davenant was to be given the right to kill him. Those were the terms of the peace offer flung impassionedly at Grahame. Davenant took it for granted that Grahame was not only wishful on any terms of wiping out the grudge between them, but that he would be eager to end Hurricane Williams.

The shock of surprise, that put a quite stupid expression on Grahame's face when the door had opened, rapidly gave way to a look of absorbed interest. Then his two thin, wasted hands stroked the drooping mustache, pulling the ends back along the lines of his prominent jawbone.

He grinned. He laughed. For the length of such a moment as a gambler feels while the dice are falling, I

could not tell what that laugh meant—whether pleased acquiescence or pleased scorn.

A second later and there was no doubt. He was jeering at Davenant.

Grahame spoke. His voice was hoarse and strained and evilly gleeful. Williams? Williams was the one man left on earth to have his friendship.

I glanced toward the women. Eunice's face was covered with distress; nothing could have seemed further from reason than what she was hearing her father say.

Dula leaned forward. Her dark face was aglow. Incredulous, amazed, she pressed the closed fingers of one hand to her cheek as if to grip back her delight.

Oh-ho-ho! Did Davenant's flesh still hurt from the bitter caress of hemp? To be beaten like a dog—and be the son of a marquis!

Then came curses and a tumult of broken sentences, scarcely connected phrases, as Grahame told of the things he could not forget—things much the fresher in his mind for having just rehearsed them to me.

Sick, drunk, feverish, he was burning up the very marrow of his bones to say what he wanted to say in that half-hour's supreme revenge on an old enemy that came with a truce on his lips. Strange; but though drunk, feverish, there was a cold sardonic strain in Grahame's fury, due no doubt to the exalted sense of triumph.

"Grahame," Davenant had said excitedly, "we cross our score from the books—by-gones wiped out— I want the life of that Williams— These hands shall drip with his blood—! You know, Winwood Grahame, when I want a man's life not God himself can keep me from getting it! Shall I let that dog live?

"Get him on shore, Grahame. Get him on shore.

After all, we ought to be friends, Grahame. You and I—— And I can't sleep, I can't eat, I can't rest, I can't die, till that dog has been drowned in his own blood at my feet! Grahame, I swear to forget everything between us——

"After all, we're of a family, Winwood. You never liked me, and I hated you for that—— But I'll go back to London. Don't you see all I want in this life or in the next is the whine for pity in my ears from that dog, as he dies?"

It was then Grahame had laughed and begun to speak. And before he had finished he had said Williams was a man; that he would trust Williams.

"If you hate him, you devil-born snake, he is my friend. He can have my ships, my money, my land, my island.

"Wipe out any of my score with you! I've lived wickedly as I could just to be sure of hell, where I can rake coals over you, you black-hearted, double-tongued, venomous spider.

"Williams—I'm going to make Williams my friend so there will be something more than old ruffian black-birders and Portuguese to look after Dakaru when I'm dead!"

Afterward I found my hands were cramped—so tightly I had gripped, hanging on, the foot of the bed.

I remember assuring myself in the pause after Grahame stopped that it wasn't so—none of it—nothing of it, possibly except the rum, which was Jamaican in flavor and always treacherous.

Also, part of the time the room swayed and heaved like a ship in long swells. And though everything seemed to be taking place at a distance, a great distance

off, as things do on the stage or in dreams, I saw and heard perfectly. The trouble was that I couldn't be sure that it happened just as I saw it. There are times when a man isn't sure of the things he sees and hears. I stared hard and saw clearly, but the picture was jumbled and for a little while not believable.

Why should Grahame have thrown himself back, his body writhing under the brown-stained coverlet, his lean fingers tearing at his breast, and his face twisted as if fighting with somebody, when nobody had touched him?

Dula swiftly reached him—and I gasped. But she did not strike. There was no knife in her hands. She talked to him rapidly. She was not angry.

It was hard to catch what she said, for Eunice was crying, with her eyes open; and sobbing something too. The innocent are always helpless in the midst of evil, being truly meant for Heaven rather than for earth. She stood twisting her slender, transparent fingers, almost choking herself with:

"Poor, poor father! What is wrong? Oh, dear God!"

Davenant was motionless; and there seemed to be nothing to him but eyes—like a basilisk, a basilisk that had been in some way terribly surprised and angered. I once saw a madman, and his eyes were like that; only Davenant's did not roll or move. Just glared.

From a long way off there were shouts, indistinct, excited. I thought at first that it was Carp Taylor shouting, and that his voice in some weird way was barely reaching me. He had Davenant's arm. Both hands were on Davenant's arm.

When I understood his words at all they were close enough, though a little muffled by his beard and thick

tongue and the effort not to have what he said go beyond Davenant's ears. But Taylor was agitated.

"Bide your time. We'll get 'im. Grahame? He's drunk an' crazy. 'Nother spell of his heart."

People were excited away off some place. The shouts came faintly. I heard because my ears in a kind of trance-like daze were straining to catch words from wherever they fell.

"Father——"

That was not Eunice's voice.

I leaned swayingly over the bed.

"— I am sorry—I am sorry. Oh, God, how I have thought wrong of you!"

Grahame was lying back, quiet now. His trembling arms lifted with effort toward Dula's low-bent face. But her face was too far away—probably swimming in the distance before his dulled eyes. He was breathing with his mouth open, heavily, wearily.

Dula put her hands to his face, but his jaw fell away again. She stroked his forehead and cheeks, and when her hands were withdrawn his eyes were closed and his mouth, too.

"Sh-h," said Dula to Eunice, who was about to throw herself across the bed, weeping. "He's asleep."

I came out of my trance-like condition with a start. My hair stood up, or tried to. The rest of me could not move.

Davenant, on his way toward the door, for the first time seemed to notice me. His were at that moment the eyes that petrify. His bearded lips curled back. The clenched white teeth showed in a grimace meant for a smile.

"I'll kill you—now!" he hissed in a fearful, low, almost confidential whisper.

His hand struck down to his belt, but it did not come out with a knife. The door opened in his face, and Hurricane Williams stood in the doorway. I won't be more glad to see the angel that comes down into hell with my pardon written in mother's tears, signed by God.

Now it was one thing for a man to say that he couldn't rest or sleep or eat, or anything like that, until Williams was dead. It was another and very different thing to stand to his face and try to kill him. Practically all the blows ever struck at Williams came from behind.

His face was hard then, even harder, more severe in line and bronze-like, than was usual. His eyes could outstare a basilisk.

Davenant drew back unsteadily. Williams gave him no more than a glance. No more than a glance went to Carp Taylor. His eyes paused on my face, and burned; I was drunk again.

Carp Taylor plucked Davenant by the arm, and they went out.

Williams looked at Dula, then at Grahame, then at Dula and said:

"You had better wake him. The *Friedrich* is in the offing."

That was how we were trapped at Dakaru. The *Friedrich* had cannon, steam and fourscore men thereabouts. There was no escaping her.

Captain Lumholtz had stopped at Apia and displayed his prisoner. He was indubitably recognized as nothing like Hurricane Williams. So Shaylor's version of the story was at last really believed.

Captain Lumholtz, furious, returned to Lelela. The

Sally Martin had gone. There was a set-to with the natives. Much of the village was burned. European chancelleries eventually heard that there had been a native war at Lelela, and that sailors from the *Friedrich* landed to protect German interests. It was the usual explanation—only the agitation started at Lelela led some years later to real native wars. The upshot of the affair was that the Germans with a combination of cunning and bluff ultimately secured possession of both Upolu and Savaii—the richest and largest islands.

The *Friedrich* had hastened on toward Dakaru, struck the southern tip of the island and come north along the coast to Grahame's harbor. That was how she chanced to be almost on top of Williams before being seen.

"The gunboat!" Dula exclaimed in a low voice, coming anxiously toward him.

Williams's eyes met hers, and in hers were alarm, tenderness, a caressing anxiety.

"Can you get away?" she asked breathlessly.

At the same time she was very close to him and made a little gesture as if to put her hands on him. Then she drew them back. I don't think she noticed at all what she was doing with her hands. The urge to touch him was strong. For that one moment the urge was repressed by the forces of hesitancy that dwell in women to keep them modest, or what is thought to be modest.

"I don't know," he said, his eyes very narrow.

It was too late to try to take out a ship. Besides the *Friedrich* had steam. May the curse of all good deep-water seamen fall on him who first put boilers into ships and gave a brute with a shovel place over bold sailormen who straddle the yard and grip the leech.

"Wake him," Williams said. "He ought to meet her.

The German is wild. I'm taking to the hills. I came for McGuire."

"Watch out for Davenant! Oh, please! But he"—she put her hand toward Grahame; her eyes did not leave Williams's face— "he was magnificent! He said——"

The boom of guns, reverberantly crashing, came upon us. The Germans, right at the mouth of the harbor, had sent a broadside into the *Sally Martin*. She was deserted. There was no reason for the broadside except that the *Friedrich* was very angry with her and had cannon. The poor *Sally Martin* was sadly shattered between wind and water.

Williams turned abruptly. "Come, McGuire."

I moved a little unsteadily. I could walk all right, but probably from standing still so long my feet had grown a bit awkward.

Eunice, with her hands to her ears, collapsed trembling into a chair.

Dula caught at Williams's arm.

Then there was revealed the woman within her, that mystic woman that had seemed to lurk under the black cloak, lined with crimson; that had nestled in the shadows behind the curtains of eyes, dark and impenetrable. How scant the line between crime and love; and often the line is erased. Her potentiality for either was great. It takes something of the recklessness of crime for a woman to break through the instinctive hesitancy of her sex and speak as Dula spoke—of love, to Hurricane Williams. I knew her; with an inner sheltered vanity I felt that I knew her as no man alive knew her; and I was not surprised at the way she spoke.

From that night in the shack at Turkee when I, drunk, had thrust a wavering candle to her face and

stood fascinated, I had not doubted that she would do whatever she wanted to do; and her love of Hurricane Williams had not been hidden. She would leave no way for him to be unaware of it. She even had had me confess for her to murder; which was scarcely less daring than the deed itself. Somehow both deed and vicarious confession seemed far from her at that hour; as far removed as the chill, Satanic beauty that had thrilled me shiveringly in the flickering candlelight, when I first saw her. Beauty she now had, too; but it was softer, not cruel. Her face was suffused with an anxious tenderness.

How when a leopard can not change his spots can woman so change? It may be that within them they do not change, but only cast off cloaks, draw back curtains. The hearts of all of them perhaps are as the alabaster box broken above the head of Christ. I doubt not but that He who knows all things, knows the inmost hearts of the wicked and loves them for what they might be if ever their hearts were struck open, as was the alabaster box of precious ointment of spikenard.

"Whom else," I have asked bitterly of myself, "but some man fierce and stern could have struck fire from her—taught in the nursery to kiss a knife over which curses had been said?"

The very iron and flinty mold that gave her disturbing fear lest he could not be moved, made her love him. And now her hour had come for speaking out, even to his face. Some psychic sense may have warned her that what is put off to the morrow may not always be done. Perhaps too the great fear that his last chance of escape from Dakaru was utterly lost increased the eager tension to have done with doubts.

Her face, its strange irregular outline framed by the downward coils of hair, so black as to have something of a raven's sheen, was aglow with daring as she looked up and said with sweet and low inflections, clear but almost whispering:

"I love you, Hurricane Williams. Am I without shame for having told you in a hundred ways? And now I use the words: I love you. Something made me nearly love you when I first heard of you. And you were so like what I wanted you to be when I first saw you—so unlike what I had feared, Hurricane Williams.

"I love the very name! Oh, I shall blush to remember this minute, but I shall blush without shame. I love you—I love you—I love you! And oh, I am afraid for you!

"Gra—my father—he is my father!—he was wonderful. All the prayers of all the saints can not relieve me of my sorrow for the way I hated him. I will waken him. He's worn out. He will help you no matter what."

I hated Hurricane Williams at that moment. I could have forgiven him—and her too—if he had swept her into his arms. I don't know what I would have forgiven them for; but there would have been forgiveness anyhow. He did not fling her away—there would never have been forgiveness then. But he was like a man fleshed with bronze. He scarcely moved. He did not turn from her. He did not draw his arm away.

He looked from her to Grahame. His eyes paused steadily, searchingly, on Grahame's face and seemed to be looking far beyond the death-like mask of the man that lay there.

With the nearest thing to softness that ever came into his voice he said, interrupting her:

"No. Don't try to waken him. That will be best. Let him sleep—sleep."

He stopped, but he had not finished. Dula, as she had said, shameless, had her hands on his breast. She stood close to him and waited, her cheeks on fire, her eyes brightly eager.

"First there must be a fight out there." He motioned slightly. "Then I will come back."

"You will come back to me?" she whispered. Her hands reached caressingly to his burned, leathern face.

"I will come back," he repeated evenly.

She did not seem to notice what little that really promised. She saw only the promise, and read it by the flame of her desire.

"Kiss me! Kiss me! Oh, kiss me and kill me. . . . That's how I love you!" She put his unresisting arm around her and with tiptoed tenseness, her dark eyes burning hungrily, reached up—waiting—to him.

Then the rattle of rifles, shouts, cries. He turned from her as if snapped by a spring.

"McGuire!"

His hand caught my shoulder. I was almost flung through the door; and it closed on something like a sob —as a woman of great thirst might sob when she pressed lips to a glass, suddenly empty.

I hung back stubbornly, his hand on my wrist gripping like a manacle, riveted.

"Stop till I tell you, Skipper. I'm not drunk—I've heard things. What's an old gunboat and Germans! Listen to me. Grahame——"

The way he said it left no doubt. The way he knew I never thought. The words fell slowly—"Grahame is dead."

CHAPTER XVI

DEATH GALLOPS BY WITH HANDS OUTSTRETCHED

THE Germans were coming ashore; two boat-loads of them.

The half dozen Portuguese were excitedly firing at the blacks, a party of whom, scenting trouble, began it. They defiantly ran away and refused orders. They had learned that Hurricane Williams was on the island.

So potent was his name that even cannibals who had never seen a white man knew of him. Stories filter and spread through the islands' bush. The blacks probably thought he had come to set them loose, and a party impatiently precipitated their freedom by loosening themselves. Others joined. The blacks were in rebellion.

The Portuguese were excited. Blood-hounds had been set on the natives. One had been killed—one dog, I mean. Several natives were shot. Stones and clubs and tools had driven the other dogs back.

The blacks, with yells of triumph, were bearing the dead dog off for a feast. No doubt they would have much preferred to have a Portuguese.

A third boat, loaded, was leaving the *Friedrich*.

The white men from off the *Sally Martin* slouched dispiritedly down on the landing. They had not been given arms. They were not given arms.

Hawkins was with Malua and the Samoans, who, grouped under the trees, were at a strategic point between the landing and the walled garden.

There was a disturbing uneasiness within me, and no hope. Williams, I told myself, did not have a chance. Numbers were against him. The sea was closed to him. Dakaru was too small an island to hide out on successfully. And men he couldn't trust were all about him.

The blacks, now amuck, might chant his praise in their feast-dance; and they might also try to use him for the feast. Possibly not; but all that afternoon my heart sagged, and I thought thoughts that made me sorry for things it was too late to mend. And I made vows, more or less feelingly designed to tempt the Lord to spare me. He did so. But the Lord is all-wise, and He knew anyhow that I could never keep my vows.

"I seen Carp Taylor talkin' to 'em—" Hawkins motioned toward the Portuguese, who, bunched together, now shot rapidly at the blacks far out of range and now turned to watch the oncoming boats.

"I seen him pointin' up there, too." He indicated the house from which Williams and I had just come.

"I yelled at 'im:

" 'What you doin', you old—— ——? Hirin' 'em to shoot us in the back, you old —— —— ——?' "

And regarding Carp Taylor Hawkins confided with me. "All I got 'o say is I hope somethin' happens 'at gives him a good excuse for gettin' hurt, bad."

Williams had conveyed to Hawkins, to Malua, to all of them, that there would be more trouble than they wanted if any of them quarreled or shot before he thought there was need of it.

Carp Taylor and Davenant were down near the landing. Williams started down.

I still tagged along, trying to tell him what I had learned in Grahame's room and breaking the story up,

perhaps incoherently. But he listened, though he did not seem to. There had been so much else to tell that I do not believe I got in all my evidence against Carp Taylor.

Williams went toward the landing. By the time he could get there the Germans would be almost within rifle-shot, for he went out of his way to pass the Portuguese.

They stopped firing. They stopped looking at Germans, too, as he came near.

He went up to the mean fellow, apparently the overseer, that had met me when I came ashore.

Without warning, without explanation, Williams said: "Drop those guns."

Five faces stared at him in sullen stupidity. The overseer sneered and jerked up the muzzle of his rifle threateningly—though perhaps defensively.

He started to say something with oaths in it, and Williams killed him. With his left hand Williams caught the barrel of the rifle. With the blow of his right hand a knife flashed. That was all, except that he wheeled, the gun club-like in one hand and the knife, its sheen reddened, in the other.

"Drop them!" he said, not loudly but with sudden tense fury, meaning it—meaning multifold times more than his words: and showing what he meant by the glare of his eyes, the strange poise of his body that appeared to be leaning against an invisible leash.

The rifles fell.

"Go over there—any place;" he made a short impatient gesture.

Five men shuffled off, their faces almost between their shoulders, staring in dull fear—as such stupid fellows might stare at the devil who cast them away, not

thinking they were worth the coal it would take to make them squirm; perhaps aware that if they were melted down they would have no souls.

Our party did not lack for rifles. Two Samoans came down and smashed these. Williams bent across his knee the one he held, threw it aside, and went on. I stumbled along after him.

Carp Taylor was saying:

"Now le's look here, Mr. Williams——"

Williams looked toward him, and confusion descended upon Carp Taylor's thick tongue.

Williams had come to the landing and seemingly ignored Taylor and Davenant, whom he passed close by as he approached the *Sally Martin's* men. But I knew by the merest tilt of his head that he had not been ignoring them. It wouldn't take much to cause me to say that he had hoped either or both of them would make a move. Surely he expected it. Perhaps they knew that he did.

He had said to his uneasy crew that they could do as they pleased—come with him, or face the Germans with uplifted arms and the best explanation that suggested itself to tell why they had let Captain Lumholtz be imposed upon at Lelela.

Cockney George shifted about from one foot to the other indecisive; Raulson came near to yielding to his impulse; but only Raikes, little rat of a fellow, his one eye glistening, stepped out. Williams's glance swept him from the feet to the one eye.

"All right, Raikes," he said indifferently and jerked a thumb toward me.

Raikes came and stood by me. Nervously, with something of an air of apology, he said:

"I guess hell ain't far off—but I don't want 'o go from no Dutch yard-arm. An' I never meant Hawkins no harm, er you. 'Cept at Lelela—an' I was drunk. Say, what was the matter with them guns that time?"

Just then Carp Taylor had stepped up and called Hurricane Williams Mr. Williams.

What Taylor was trying to do without giving offense was to point out that Williams did not have even the remotest of a fighting chance. About all he succeeded in doing, in his watchfulness against giving offense, was to protest that he would do anything on earth to help Williams. His idea of helping was to stay there and intercede with the Germans.

"And you?"

Williams abruptly drove the question at Davenant.

Davenant's forehead swiftly became red; and I suppose his face flushed. It was not easy to be sure through the blackness of his beard.

His manner was unflustered, but what could he say? Unless he were exceedingly cautious he might not live to see Williams outnumbered, hemmed in and caught.

Taylor had no doubt told him some things about Williams's reputation, and how it was scarcely exaggerated; and he had seen what happened up the beach among the Portuguese. So he was, though he did not greatly show it, afraid of that tigerish figure. In empty tones he said:

"I've misjudged you. My quarrel is with Grahame. When the Germans get here I'll tell them you——"

Davenant was making a strong but rather late effort to play his favorite rôle of friend to one whom he wished damned.

I have sometimes suspected Williams of humor,

though he never laughed. In few words and short sentences, a bit ambiguous, he said no. It would be dangerous for them to meet the Germans. They should come with him. He would watch over them. The Germans were likely to be waspishly angry.

Davenant, very erect, and Carp Taylor, shambling dejectedly, moved along the landing and up toward the trees, where the little party watched the coming of six times their number.

The Germans landed. To attack they would have to rush across some three hundred yards of open ground. Off to the right the blacks, their yells mingled with the howls of dogs that persisted in threatening the savages, must have caused Captain Lumholtz, whose dumpy figure could be plainly seen—Red Shaylor was with him—to wonder if a host of wild men could not be moved against him. The Germans quickly and roughly took in hand the *Sally Martin's* men; but they showed no eagerness to get far from their boats.

That was really good judgment. Lumholtz knew nothing of the lay of Dakaru—a difficulty that would presently be overcome by flanking, scouting and skirmishing.

The *Sally Martin's* men would perhaps readily if not eagerly show willingness to tell him how few were in Williams's party. The Portuguese, who had moved off down the beach, no doubt helplessly wondering what had become of Grahame, would soon be offering him information.

Hawkins did not notice the Germans. His eyes were at Carp Taylor's back; but he kept up a monotone of rumbling abuse at Taylor, who was uncomfortably trying not to appear to be paying attention. He made many

harsh remarks about Taylor's progenitors, his courage, his honesty, his personal appearance, his hopes of Heaven. Williams told him to shut up, not with words, but with a tap, a blow on the shoulder and a glance.

In what Hawkins thought was a whisper he complained to me of the sad fate which made his big body a bulwark so to speak, and certainly a German target, for that vicious, treacherous, dirty, cowardly nigger-stealer.

"An,' Red-Top," he said with strained accents of woe, "I got scars on my back yet!"

A man with a white flag on a rifle-barrel left the Germans and came up from the beach toward us.

Carp Taylor said that he would go down and meet him and find out what the thrice-doubly-cursed Germans wanted.

"The two of us," Williams answered, dropping his revolver into my hand as he stood up from where he had been squatting like a native.

"G'ory hell," said Raikes shrilly, "them Dutchers'll pot 'im!"

Of course I can tell only what I saw, and it happened at a distance—almost two hundred yards away. The bearer of the white flag seemed a little uneasy at two men coming, and he stopped short of half-way.

Williams and Taylor went down to him. Presently there was a puff of smoke and a report from the rifle which bore the white flag. But the rifle was pointed skyward. Williams, himself unarmed except for a knife, knew something of how forgetful people could be when keeping even a truce with him; and he had made the man pull the trigger just to see what happened.

I do not believe treachery was intended. The messenger seems to have been sent out to impress Grahame—

probably he mistook Carp Taylor for Grahame—and carried word that it would be futile and dangerous to harbor Hurricane Williams. Perhaps the fellow, selected because he could speak English pretty well, exaggerated with cunning intent the punishment that had come upon Lelela, suggesting, if not threatening, something similar for Dakaru.

What Williams answered I do not know. He might repeat words some one else had said, but he would never quote himself.

What sign or gesture or glance may have passed between the messenger and Carp Taylor would be impossible to say—and what happened was over almost before we could move a foot. For one of the few times in his life Williams was probably caught unaware, unprepared. Carp Taylor jumped his back, pinning his arms, at the same time bellowing for help. He needed it.

The man with the white flag took a moment too long to reverse his rifle and lift it as a club; for before he struck, Carp Taylor lay twisting, awkward even in death, on the sand with a knife buried in his belly. Williams crouched, awaiting the fall of the blow.

The blow did not fall. The man stumbled backward, frantically reversing his rifle again and getting under the sanctuary of his white flag.

I saw Williams's arm go out in a gesture. He was sending the man back to the Germans on the beach.

Williams turned and came rapidly but unhurriedly toward us. He did not glance behind him. From where we were we could see all of the Germans staring, almost gaping, at him. They too had heard of the quickness and savagery of Hurricane Williams, and were somewhat impressed by what they had seen.

However, they respected their own flag. No shots were fired.

As he came up the eyes of all of us were upon his face. "Lelela's burned. Taulemeito's killed," he said, and nothing more, but the gesture backward toward the beach told by whom.

Raikes cursed feverishly. Hawkins's big lumpish face wore an almost ludicrous expression of rage and pain. Lelela had been the nearest to Heaven that men such as he and I could hope for.

Samoans are emotional as children except at times when emotion is expected. Those of pride, and few of them in the early days were without it—they have since been civilized—are stoical in shame and tragedy. For some moments their faces were strained resolutely. They were silent. Then Malua, as if to be done with the mockery of stoicism, flung up his rifle and yelled to the Germans—demanding why they delayed in coming to meet their death.

The cannibals in the distance caught up the yell and redoubled it. The other Samoans, brandishing rifles, cried their anger. Dakaru seemed the home of fiends.

The Germans, though they intended to do something all right, were still undecided. All the time in the world was theirs. Williams was cut off from the sea.

Officers were talking with Portuguese and pointing this way and that. Nobody was to slip through their fingers at Dakaru.

Williams had looked about two or three times before he asked where Davenant had gone.

Raikes spoke up, saying he had seen Davenant just edging off a while before toward the house. Williams looked toward the beach, then steadily toward the house.

"McGuire," he said.

I left the tree-trunk against which I was leaning and followed him.

He went rapidly up the road and through the grilled gates. I have often thought that he must have had a sense of danger that more or less served him at all times.

In the grounds we met Laulai and Nolopu running with horror on their faces. They were wildly seeking help. I don't know what they said or tried to say. Cries reached us from inside the house and told all that my ears could hear.

We leaped into the hall and ran with something like barefoot noiselessness down the matted floor.

"You shall not touch him —— Don't —— Don't! —— You shall not! —— Oh, God! —— I'll kill you —— You! —— Oh, oh! Awh-o!——"

We were through the open door and into the room.

Williams stopped short and stood still. He, whose way it was to strike before a breath could be drawn, stopped motionless. But his body was braced in that strange poise from which he could move with a swiftness, a force incredible.

We had come too late—or rather he had come too late, for I never felt more helpless, more worthless, more bitterly meager—to stay the hand of Davenant.

Though there was much else to see, to notice, to horrify, I saw that his hand held the knife that belonged to Dula; and that vibrantly shocked me. That seemed wanton irony, malicious, on the part of God—for Dula, breast upward, arms outflung, lay backward across the bed—across the form of Grahame. She had not known how unwakable his sleep, and had died defending his death-chilled body from a knife-thrust.

Eunice crouched on the floor, moaning. The side of her delicate face was blackened by a blow. She was not yet out of her daze.

And Hurricane Williams made no move. Like a statue he stood, a statue with living eyes. His eyes were on Davenant.

A red stain appeared on the coverlet, and grew and grew, reaching out with crimson figuration as if cryptically writing in blood some message that explained it all.

Dula's face was in repose, as the faces often are of those who die, even violently, in a way worthy of God's mercy.

And Hurricane Williams stood motionless.

I don't know what Davenant thought or felt, though I stared at him. I will not say that he showed great terror. Perhaps his terror was too great to be shown; or maybe he was nerved by fear. He was afraid; and it was not because two men had come. I am sure of that, for all Davenant saw was Williams's face.

Not a word was spoken. Not a sound was made except the muffled sobbing of Eunice, who had fallen forward, and except the slow drip-drip-drip from the edge of the bed.

And yet Williams made no move.

In a sort of hypnotic terror I edged leaningly forward and looked into his face. Great God! He was smiling. If the line on those closed, twisted lips could possibly have been anything else I would not call it a smile. That interminable waiting, that implacable slowness, that steady glare of eyes, that smile like a grotesque crack that had come by some hard blow into the face of a figure of bronze, at last made Davenant flinch. He took a slow step backward.

Then Williams moved slightly forward. His hands were empty.

Davenant, no doubt unconsciously, edged backward again and turned his wrist, putting the knife in a position to lunge, to thrust straight out, fencer-like. The straight thrust is a difficult blow to evade; the most deadly in a skilled hand.

Williams, inch by inch, went on.

He was not moving warily, but by some queer reversal of his character was drawing out the ritual of death-dealing. I was to remember afterward that it was the first time I had ever seen Hurricane Williams vengeful. All other times had been fights to have work done or life saved.

And by one of the enigmatic twists of his brain he did not seem to hold malice against any person that struck merely at his life. Maybe when one has dropped, neck-bound, through a gallows trap one learns the strange wisdom of the dead, which is to have no bitterness about ousting the soul from its house of clay unless that soul belong to some one dearly regarded.

Inch by inch he moved.

Davenant's hand trembled, but the hands of men of great courage may tremble as the fight's beginning is delayed. But he moved backward till he could go no farther. He was against the wall. He drew himself closely against it. I will not say that he shrank against it. But when he felt the wall to his back and knew retreat was over, a sudden look much like a gleam of terror spread out in his eyes. Yet he was a man as full of evilness and wicked deeds as the devil could wish, and the devil must have sustained him with something akin to hope; for he did not break.

Williams, implacably, almost imperceptibly, leaned nearer, closer.

Davenant had bared his teeth the better to breathe. They gleamed, but there was no deadly white smile about it. They were clenched—but shook a little.

The end came; Davenant took a strainedly deep breath and lunged, his arm outthrust.

Williams, empty-handed, was not an arm's length away, and—I can't tell how it happened. I can tell only what was done. All was over in less time than a thimbleful of sand would trickle through one's fingers.

Across Williams's shoulder I saw the mingling of incredulous surprise and agony on Davenant's face and heard the snap of his broken forearm. Williams had caught his wrist, twisted the arm over—inside of the wrist up—and broke it at the elbow as he might have broken a stick.

On that instant his hands, almost too swift to be seen, reached Davenant's head and caught it vise-like—a hand to the chin, a hand gripping the back of his head. Rising to tiptoes, Williams bent back the head, jerked sidewise with the full weight of his strength; and the neck snapped—a dull, sickening crack. It had happened so suddenly that not even frightened lips could have formed themselves for prayer.

Williams threw the body from him, threw it by the grip he still had on the head. The body fell across the chest. Jerking, flopping, it lay across the chest where there were many bottles of strong Jamaica rum—all the treasure of Grahame's that Davenant had come seeking as profit for his vengeance.

With hands to eyes I stumbled from the room, shuddering.

CHAPTER XVII

REST—REST FOR THE WAYWARD AND PASSION-WORN

MY STORY is told. Other things happened, of course; and there was much fighting; many people died. Hurricane Williams again took the web out of the hands of the Fates and snarled it up to serve his own ends. Luck did not help him.

If Captain Lumholtz and his officers had not, as naval officers were always eager to do, stayed on shore and taken up quarters in Grahame's house, Williams would, I believe, have boarded the gunboat. And who shall say that he would have failed? Not I. He never failed where the risk of his own life and his inordinate daring could win.

Certainly the Germans, skirmishing upward from the beach, driving us back, almost outflanking our few numbers, had reason to believe themselves as safe behind the walls of Grahame's garden as on their own ship.

How many of them died that afternoon I do not know. That night they were bunched at the gates, and they patrolled the grounds and surrounded the house while their officers dined well and drank.

The *Friedrich* came in close to the landing so her guns covered the beach between the house and the water. All was safe as intelligent precaution could make it.

We drew back late that afternoon, firing as we went.

On the morrow we could expect to be hunted down, crushed out by weight of numbers. Our little party was thinned. When night came two Samoans had been killed, another wounded. And that was not all.

Hawkins had an arm made useless and cursed his thigh, where another bullet lay in the flesh so that he could hardly drag himself. But drag himself he did. Whenever he could find prop or rest he shot with his one hand. He enviously damned me because I was too thin, he said, to be a target.

He had the stuff within him that doesn't give way. He fought as hard as he could, though one arm was useless and a leg was worse than useless. Though he expected, as I did too, death and hell on the morrow, he jeered at the men he shot, cursed those he missed.

Requiescat in pace; may he rest in peace. The snowfall of years since then has buried him.

Raikes died. Shaylor and a half dozen skirmishers came almost upon our rear. For seconds the fighting was hand to hand. Whether Raikes, with a sudden gallantry leaped to take the blow of the cutlas that came at Williams or sprang blindly away from the swipe of a rifle at his own head and dodged into the cutlas, I shall not try to say. He died like a hero in that his life saved probably the life of another. No doubt in the Great Judgment-Hall God won't be too inquisitive about what was courage and what was cowardice. Anyway Hawkins pronounced a blessing, a blessing though well filled with oaths, over the little twisted body, its head sliced, the one eye opened still with a kind of impudent stare. Perhaps as life fled that one eye caught a glimpse of the mysteries into which the dead go, and was unimpressed.

I thought that Shaylor died. I shot him. Hawkins,

having two good arms then, threw a rifle hurtling and hit him—and nearly hit Williams, too. Williams, turning with his rifle club-like, smote Shaylor; then stooped and picked the cutlas from his hand.

I did not see Shaylor move again. But some years afterward I heard of a Red Shaylor, a seaman, a big fellow, muchly scarred from temple to chest. Perhaps the Fates, wholly unaware that Williams had snatched him from the sea when the *Roanoke* sank, had made no further provision for Shaylor's death, so that he went on living, living, living, indefinitely.

Night came and we rested. That is, Hawkins and I rested. I felt futile, akin to disgrace, because I did not have a scratch on my body. It was as if the people who had fought with us did not think me worthy of even a blow, of the waste of time it took to put a bead on to a rifle.

Williams rested not at all; and the Samoans lay out in the darkness, watching. He went alone through the blackness to the cannibals; and before he came back a full moon raised itself in the cloudless sky as if pale with horror at the things men do.

How he met, and what he said to that pack of cannibals I do not know; but it probably had something to do with the renewed terrific din and clamor they set up. They slipped down through the groves and burned the outbuildings; they danced and shrieked in the far-flung glare of the fires and dashed leapingly through the moonlight from shadow to shadow.

But they remained in the same whereabouts. They did not attack anybody, though the Germans at first were alarmed and fired at them, but did not move out to come well within the range.

The fear in the Germans quieted somewhat, but not the noise; and the sailors watched, fascinated. They grouped themselves to look from a comfortable distance, on that sight; and many of those stationed on guard and patrol gave their attention chiefly to staring in the direction of the cannibals, who kept tirelessly at their spectacle.

Then Williams and Malua and six Samoans went down to the wall about Grahame's house; and some inattentive sentries found their throats crushed strangulingly. Perhaps more of them died than would have, had not the man with the white flag lied when he told that Taulemeito was dead.

The entrances were choked with guards. Patrols—maybe—evaded in the shadows and from behind bushes; and doors are not the only means of entering a large, rambling house banked with shrubs and vines. Windows in hot countries are always wide, and netting screen is easily cut.

Captain Lumholtz had dined well with two of his officers; and they drank—drank so much that perhaps they did not believe their eyes when dark figures began to materialize within the shadows at the outer edge of the lamps in the large room. Anyway it was true—what their eyes told them; and Captain Lumholtz and his next in command respected the order for silence, as well-trained officers should.

Their younger and more impulsive companion leaped up. No doubt he felt, a little alcoholically, that there are times when it is better to die than to keep still.

He died, and without breaking the silence, Hurricane Williams, as if going from a spring-board, caught

him—hands to throat—and one of the Samoans struck across his head.

Later the officer of the guard came in to report. And he did not go out. He too stayed to sit in meditative silence and await the morning.

With the dawn Laulai and Nopolu, sent by Williams, came searching for us. And we, with Hawkins leaning heavily on the three of us, and a sapling crutch as well—his leg stiff but his heart high—went down among the baffled, glowering sailors of the *Friedrich.*

Orders were orders even in those days to Germans in uniform; and Captain Lumholtz dearly loved his stout pudgy body and the life that dwelt in that dumpy habitation. His fellow officers shared a similar affection for themselves. They were much pained because Hurricane Williams would not take their words to let him sail unmolested from Dakaru.

He said that he would kill them the moment he or any of his party was attacked; that he would kill them the instant they refused to carry out his orders. And they believed him.

It is true the sailors did not realize until too late to have done anything courageous—though mutinous—just what the situation was. Group after group was called into the house and ordered by their own captain to lay down their arms. Every last man remaining on the *Friedrich* was called off, together with the astonished crew of the *Sally Martin* who had been put on board, prisoners.

Williams had said:

"If a shot is fired from her as the boats go out to board her, you die."

Captain Lumholtz protested, and he even might have

been willing to die had he known what was to be sent out in those boats. Cannibals. They boarded the undefended, the deserted gunboat and they wrecked her. They smashed everything that was smashable. They hacked the masts, but did not cut them down. That was too much like work. They cut the rigging—that was more like fun. By special instructions they went into the engine-room and twisted and battered everything that in their childish, unscientific way could be twisted and battered. They wrecked the *Friedrich* and they looted her. Williams was remembering Lelela and German vengeance there.

It would be many long hard weeks before she could take the sea again. And in the dull, dry archives of the German Admiralty is the report that off Dakaru the *Friedrich* was disabled by a hurricane. The Germans are literal.

Williams took toll of the *Friedrich's* pride for what she did, and claimed to have done, at Lelela. We went out in the late afternoon of that great day. It was our hour, our day; it was the *Friedrich's* men in the *Friedrich's* boats that warped us out.

But we did not go in the *Sally Martin.* She was shattered. However, the *Fijiian Maid* and the smaller, swifter, and as stanch little *Eunice* were brought alongside of her and supplies transferred.

Our crew worked in a kind of feverish exaltation. They, remembering cuffs and blows and abuse, jeered the Germans.

The blacks worked too. They were going home. Hurricane Williams had promised.

The richness of Grahame's trees and fields was raided. Chickens and pigs fairly overran the *Fijiian Maid.*

All was helter-skelter of course; but what was needed was put on board, and that was the thing of importance.

And when the German sailors, sweating, furious, helpless, had towed us out, we who had been on the *Sally Martin,* by way of thanks and reward, gave them a cheer—of a kind—as we cast off. And, ungrateful to be alive, they answered not at all.

Williams, on board the *Fijiian Maid,* and all canvas out, with his cannibals and the Samoans, led the way westward. And we followed on the *Eunice,* sails shortened and little to do except to talk and remember.

As the sun fell away, burning the lazy clouds that banked the east, filling them with strange fires, and night threw up her impalpable cooling incense to foretell her coming, the elation of the day died out in me. Down in the cabin a girl of wonderful golden hair and fragile features—her cheek now bruised, her eyes black underneath and swollen—sobbed, disconsolate, and shivered, though about her shoulders I had thrown a heavy black cloak lined with crimson.

What the future had for her none could guess. She, who knew nothing of the world, least of all.

What Williams eventually did do was to rerig and rename the *Fijiian Maid* and sell her. He gave the money and Eunice Grahame, together with a letter telling the facts, into the keeping of a wealthy young Englishman by the name of Trevalyan, who was cruising in the Carolines. I heard that love at last disposed of her ill-fortune. Trevalyan married her.

Hawkins, who refused to be put to bed, sat on deck with his arm bound across his breast and his stiff leg propped up. And he was silent.

Perhaps he too was thinking of the large grave, dug

under the shadow of an orange-tree, where the sweet-scented blossoms would fall; dug near the row of fire-tipped poinsettias whose burning flowers reached from their leafless stems like flames magically turned motionless, and not far from the towering figs where the multicolored cockatoos preened and scolded. Into that grave we had laid father and daughter, each wrapped about in clean *tappa* cloth, unspotted, fragrant from the press of sandal-wood.

And though there were the flat stolid faces of Germans all about, staring, I had tried to say a prayer—aloud. God in His infinite wisdom knew how greatly those poor passion-ridden bodies were in need of long rest. And He knew what was in my heart.

But only He knew what was in the heart of Hurricane Williams—though it was in keeping with his fate, with the irony that burned him and turned to ashes almost all that he did, for him to have loved her at the moment Davenant struck. But, his face inscrutably tense, he stared down into that coffinless hole where Dula lay by her father, and said nothing, then or afterward.

Their faces were covered with the white cloth as if to offer some courteous little protection from the black, moist dirt that was pushed back in upon them. There were many new graves at Dakaru, but none were near enough to disturb the rest of Dula and her father.

"Look — look! oh, look!" Hawkins cried with an uneasy thrill of awe as he thrust his hand toward the eastern sky. I looked. And there, coming through the clouds, was a great full moon, red as if it had been splashed with blood.

THE END

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